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SELECTIONS FROM

FIVE ENGLISH POETS

EDITED WITH INTRODUCTION AND NOTES

BY

MARY E. LITCHFIELD

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INTRODUCTION

When a poem is read aloud it is easy to realize that poetry is closely related to music. Like music it awakens vague, mysterious feelings which cannot be expressed in ordinary speech; and the person who fails to catch the subtle melody of a poem gets but little from it even though he understands perfectly the meaning of the words. To illustrate this, put into commonplace prose a passage of beautiful verse, — for instance, lines 358–372 of *The Ancient Mariner*, beginning, "Sometimes a-dropping from the sky," — and then compare the prose version with the original. The two will be found as unlike as the flower after it has been dissected by the botanist, and the same flower still on the stalk, opening its petals to the morning sun.

The Greeks divided all poetry into three kinds, — lyric, epic, and dramatic poetry, and there is no better general division. The lyric, which is properly a song, expresses the transient feeling or mood of the writer, and therefore is never very long. One must be sensitive to the music of verse to care for a poem of this kind, because it tells no story. Dryden's *Song for St. Cecilia's Day* and Gray's *Elegy*, both included in the present volume, are lyrics. Among the most beautiful of English lyrics are Milton's *Lycidas*, Wordsworth's

Ode on Intimations of Immortality, and Shelley's *To a Skylark* and *Adonais;* while of American poems of the same kind none is nobler than Lowell's *Commemoration Ode.* Short lyrics, among which are songs and sonnets, can be found in the works of almost every poet of note, whether English or American. Under the head of epic or narrative poetry are included long productions like the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* of Homer and the *Paradise Lost* of Milton, and shorter poems, such as Coleridge's *Ancient Mariner* and Longfellow's *Evangeline.* Indeed, every piece of verse that tells a story, however short it may be, belongs with the epics or narratives. Dramatic poetry includes well-known plays like Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice* and *Julius Cæsar*, and also certain poems not written for the stage, such as Browning's *Pippa Passes* and Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound.* In a dramatic production the poet goes out of himself for the time being, and expresses the thoughts and feelings of other characters.

It may have been noticed that in this description of the principal kinds of poetry, only three of the poems included in this book have been mentioned. This is because the other three — *The Traveller*, *The Deserted Village*, and *The Cotter's Saturday Night* — do not fit exactly into any of the divisions. One would class them with the epics rather than with the lyrics or the dramas, but they are not properly narratives, because they tell no story; they are really descriptive and reflective poems. One often comes upon a difficulty of this kind when attempting to classify a poem, and the truth is

that several smaller divisions are necessary if every production is to be placed where it belongs. But while it is desirable to know whether one is reading a lyric, an epic, or a drama, it is far more important to enjoy a beautiful poem than to be able properly to classify it.

The following list may prove useful to those who wish to know more of the poets represented in this volume than can be learned from the short sketches of their lives which it includes:

J. R. Green: *Short History of the English People;* Stopford Brooke: *English Literature;* Frederick Ryland: *Chronological Outlines of English Literature;* Edmund Gosse: *A History of Eighteenth-Century Literature; Dictionary of National Biography* (British); G. Saintsbury: *Dryden* (English Men of Letters Series); James Russell Lowell: essay on Dryden in *Among my Books*, vol. i; W. L. Phelps: *Gray* (Athenæum Press Series); Matthew Arnold: essay on Gray in *Essays in Criticism*, second series; James Russell Lowell: essay on Gray in *Latest Literary Essays;* Austin Dobson: *Life of Goldsmith* (Great Writers Series); William Black: *Goldsmith* (E. M. L. Series); J. C. Shairp: *Burns* (E. M. L. Series); Thomas Carlyle: essay on Burns in *Critical and Miscellaneous Essays*, and [Burns] "The Hero as Man of Letters" in *Heroes and Hero Worship;* H. D. Traill: *Coleridge* (E. M. L. Series); T. Hall Caine: *Life of Coleridge* (Great Writers Series); J. C. Shairp: "Coleridge as Poet and Philosopher" in *Studies in Poetry and Philosophy;* James Russell Lowell: "Address in Westminster Abbey, 7th May, 1885" [Coleridge], in *Democracy and Other Essays;* A. C. Swinburne: *Essays and Studies;* Walter Pater: "Coleridge," in *Appreciations.*

FIVE ENGLISH POETS

JOHN DRYDEN

1631–1700

ALTHOUGH Dryden is but little read in these days, he fills an important place in the history of English literature. As the foremost writer of the last third of the seventeenth century, he is the connecting link between Milton, "the last of the Elizabethans," and Pope, the chief poet of the age of Queen Anne. He was born in Northamptonshire, and had the good fortune to live in the country until his thirteenth year, when he was sent to the famous Westminster School, in what is now the heart of London. A few years after finishing his course at Cambridge University he went back to London, and lived there chiefly during the rest of his long and busy life. At the age of thirty-nine he was made poet-laureate and historiographer-royal, although his best work was not done until after he was fifty years old. From Milton's death, 1674, until his own in 1700, "Glorious John," as he was called, reigned without a rival in English letters; and one can picture him as a short, stout, somewhat ruddy-faced gentleman, sitting in Will's Coffee House surrounded by younger authors who vie with one another for the honor of a pinch out of his snuffbox. He died at the age of sixty-nine, and was buried in the Poets' Corner in Westminster Abbey, near Chaucer and Cowley.

Dryden is often called "the first of the moderns." This is because he was one of the earliest to write clear, strong English prose, and because as a poet he was thoughtful and brilliant rather than highly imaginative. Lowell says of him: "He had, beyond most, the gift of the right word. . . . In ripeness of mind and bluff heartiness of expression he takes rank with the best." Beside prose works and dramas he wrote poems of many kinds, including translations and paraphrases. His satires are unrivaled. The finest is, perhaps, the first part of *Absalom and Achitophel.* He is now best known by two lyric poems, *Alexander's Feast* and the *Song for St. Cecilia's Day;* while his *Palamon and Arcite*, a paraphrase of Chaucer's *Knightes Tale*, still delights the reader who cares for a good story in verse.

A SONG FOR ST. CECILIA'S DAY

I

From harmony,[1] from heavenly harmony
This universal frame[2] began.
When Nature underneath a heap
Of jarring atoms lay,
And could not heave her head,
The tuneful voice was heard from high:
"Arise, ye more than dead!"
Then cold and hot and moist and dry
In order to their stations leap,
And Music's power obey.
From harmony, from heavenly harmony
This universal frame began;
From harmony to harmony

NOTE. — Dryden wrote this song in 1687 for the festival of St. Cecilia, the patron saint of music. To be appreciated it must be read aloud, for it is full of musical effects, especially stanzas 3–6. St. Cecilia has been represented by Raphael and other artists as playing upon some instrument, surrounded by listening angels.

1. **From harmony, etc.** Some of the ancients believed that music helped in the creation of the heavenly bodies, and that their motions were accompanied by a harmony known as "the music of the spheres."

2. **This universal frame,** the visible universe.

Through all the compass of the notes it ran,
The diapason closing full in Man.[1]

2

What passion cannot Music raise and quell?
When Jubal[2] struck the corded shell,[3]
His list'ning brethren stood around,
And, wond'ring, on their faces fell
To worship that celestial sound.
Less than a god they thought there could not dwell
Within the hollow of that shell
That spoke so sweetly and so well.
What passion cannot Music raise and quell?

3

The trumpet's loud clangor
Excites us to arms,
With shrill notes of anger
And mortal alarms.[4]
The double double double beat
Of the thundering drum
Cries, "Hark, the foes come!
Charge, charge, 't is too late to retreat!"

1. **The diapason, etc.** *The diapason* means here *the entire compass of tones.* The idea is that in man, the highest of God's creatures, are included all the virtues and powers of the lower creation.

2. **Jubal.** It is said of Jubal: "He was the father of all such as handle the harp and organ." — Genesis iv, 21.

3. **The corded shell,** *i.e.* the lyre. The first lyre was supposed to have been formed by drawing strings over a tortoise shell.

4. **Mortal alarms,** *i.e.* notes that rouse men to deadly conflict.

4

The soft complaining flute
In dying notes discovers[1]
The woes of hopeless lovers,
Whose dirge is whispered by the warbling lute.

5

Sharp violins proclaim
Their jealous pangs and desperation,
Fury, frantic indignation,
Depth of pains and height of passion,
For the fair disdainful dame.

6

But oh! what art can teach,
What human voice can reach
The sacred organ's praise?
Notes inspiring holy love,
Notes that wing their heavenly ways
To mend[2] the choirs above.

7

Orpheus[3] could lead the savage race,
And trees unrooted left their place,
Sequacious of the lyre;

1. **Discovers,** reveals.
2. **Mend,** amend, improve.
3. **Orpheus** is said to have been a Thracian poet who moved rocks and trees and tamed wild beasts by playing upon his lyre.

But bright Cecilia raised the wonder higher:
When to her organ vocal breath was given,
An angel heard, and straight[1] appeared —
Mistaking earth for heaven.

GRAND CHORUS

As from the power of sacred lays
The spheres began to move,
And sung the great Creator's praise
To all the blest above:
So, when the last and dreadful hour[2]
This crumbling pageant shall devour,
The trumpet shall be heard on high,
The dead shall live, the living die,
And Music shall untune the sky.

1. **Straight,** straightway, immediately.
2. **The last and dreadful hour,** the Day of Judgment.

THOMAS GRAY

1716–1771

In speaking of Gray, some one has said that no other writer has come down to posterity with such a small book under his arm; and to this may be added the statement that every piece in his book shows careful finish. His fame rests mainly on three poems: the *Elegy*, *The Progress of Poesy*, and *The Bard*. Of these the *Elegy* is by far the most popular, because it expresses in simple and beautiful language sentiments which appeal to all, whatever their condition.

In character Gray was high-minded, and in temperament reserved and shy. It is said that after he was acknowledged to be the greatest poet living in England, people used to watch eagerly for a glimpse of him; but he usually managed to elude them and to slip away unnoticed. His sensitiveness may have been due in part to the fact that his health was delicate and that he was much alone when a child — for all his brothers and sisters died in infancy. Although unfortunate in his father, he was blessed with a devoted mother, who by her exertions enabled him to go to Cambridge University. It is pleasant to know that he warmly returned her love and that he now rests by her side in the churchyard at Stoke Poges, which is always associated with the *Elegy*. On her tomb he placed the inscription "— mother of many children, one of whom alone had the misfortune to survive her." Gray's friends were warmly attached to

him. With one of them, Horace Walpole, the well-known author and collector, he traveled on the continent soon after leaving the university; and although they quarreled and separated the friendship was renewed later. Gray never married. In 1742 he returned to Cambridge and lived there during the rest of his life, with the exception of two years spent in London. After he became famous the laureateship was offered to him, but his dislike of publicity caused him to refuse it. In 1768 he was made Professor of Modern History and Languages at Cambridge. All his life he was a student; indeed he was the most learned of the English poets, except possibly Milton. In some respects he was in advance of his age. He appreciated certain kinds of poetry that no one else liked in his time, and he cared greatly for wild nature. In these days, when almost every one loves rugged mountains and remote regions by the sea, it is hard to realize that there ever was a time when most persons preferred to look upon trim or even stiff gardens or the cultivated grounds of a country seat; but such was the case. Gray's admiration for wild nature comes out in his prose, especially in his letters, and in his *Journal in the Lakes* written in 1769; but later writers, Wordsworth above all, have expressed the same feeling in delightful verse.

As a poet Gray stands for beauty of form rather than for depth of thought or breadth of sympathy. He is first of all an artist, and his poems are among the most perfect in the English language.

ELEGY

WRITTEN IN A COUNTRY CHURCHYARD

THE curfew[1] tolls the knell of parting day,
The lowing herd winds slowly o'er the lea,
The plowman homeward plods his weary way,
And leaves the world to darkness and to me.

Now fades the glimmering landscape on the sight,
And all the air a solemn stillness holds,
Save where the beetle wheels his droning flight,
And drowsy tinklings lull the distant folds;

Save that from yonder ivy-mantled tow'r
The moping owl does to the moon complain

NOTE. — The *Elegy* was finished at Stoke Poges in 1750, when the poet was thirty-four years old. It was so popular that one edition followed quickly upon another, and it was even translated into foreign languages.

Notice that throughout the poem the lines are of equal length, each consisting of five feet or measures, and that in a stanza the alternate lines rhyme.

1. **The curfew** was an evening bell which originally warned people to cover their fires, put out their lights, and go to bed. It was instituted in England after the Norman Conquest. The word comes from the French *couvrir* (cover) and *feu* (fire).

Of such, as wand'ring near her secret bow'r,
  Molest her ancient solitary reign.

Beneath those rugged elms, that yew-tree's shade,
  Where heaves the turf in many a mould'ring heap,
Each in his narrow cell for ever laid,
  The rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep.

The breezy call of incense-breathing Morn,[1]
  The swallow twitt'ring from the straw-built shed,
The cock's shrill clarion, or the echoing horn,
  No more shall rouse them from their lowly bed.

For them no more the blazing hearth shall burn,
  Or busy housewife ply her evening care;
No children run to lisp their sire's return,
  Or climb his knees the envied kiss to share.

Oft did the harvest to their sickle yield,
  Their furrow oft the stubborn glebe[2] has broke;
How jocund did they drive their team afield!
  How bowed the woods beneath their sturdy stroke!

Let not Ambition mock their useful toil,
  Their homely joys, and destiny obscure;
Nor Grandeur hear with a disdainful smile
  The short and simple annals of the poor.

1. **Incense-breathing Morn.** The poet regards the morning as a person; that is, he personifies morning. Personification is seldom used now, but the eighteenth-century poets delighted in it. It is frequently employed in this poem.

2. **Glebe,** soil, ground.

The boast of heraldry,[1] the pomp of pow'r,
And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,
Awaits alike th' inevitable hour.
The paths of glory lead but to the grave.

Nor you, ye Proud, impute to these the fault,
If Mem'ry o'er their tomb no trophies raise,
Where through the long-drawn aisle and fretted vault[2]
The pealing anthem swells the note of praise.

Can storied urn[3] or animated[4] bust
Back to its mansion call the fleeting breath?
Can Honour's voice provoke[5] the silent dust,
Or Flatt'ry sooth the dull cold ear of Death?

Perhaps in this neglected spot is laid
Some heart once pregnant with celestial fire;
Hands that the rod of empire might have swayed,
Or waked to ecstasy the living lyre.

But Knowledge to their eyes her ample page
Rich with the spoils of time did ne'er unroll;
Chill Penury repressed their noble rage,
And froze the genial current of the soul.

1. **The boast of heraldry,** *i.e.* whatever has to do with high rank or pride of birth.

2. **Where through the long-drawn aisle, etc.** It was the custom to bury the poorer people of a village in the churchyard, and the rich or high-born in the church.

3. **Storied urn.** Funeral urns such as were used by the ancients were frequently decorated with scenes from the life of the deceased.

4. **Animated,** *i.e.* life-like.

5. **Provoke,** call forth, call back to life.

Full many a gem of purest ray serene[1]
The dark unfathomed caves of ocean bear:
Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,
And waste its sweetness on the desert air.

Some village-Hampden,[2] that with dauntless breast,
The little Tyrant of his fields withstood,
Some mute inglorious Milton[3] here may rest,
Some Cromwell[4] guiltless of his country's blood.

Th' applause of list'ning senates to command,
The threats of pain and ruin to despise,
To scatter plenty o'er a smiling land,
And read their hist'ry in a nation's eyes,

Their lot forbade: nor circumscribed alone
Their growing virtues, but their crimes confined;
Forbade to wade through slaughter to a throne,
And shut the gates of mercy on mankind,

The struggling pangs of conscious truth to hide,
To quench the blushes of ingenuous shame,

1. **Full many a gem, etc.** One of the best-known stanzas in English poetry.

2. **Village-Hampden.** John Hampden was an English patriot who refused to pay taxes levied by the king without the consent of Parliament, and who died in 1643 from a wound received while fighting for the liberties of England.

3. **Milton.** John Milton (1608–1674), the author of *Paradise Lost*, is generally ranked as the greatest English poet after Shakespeare.

4. **Cromwell.** Oliver Cromwell (1599–1658), the famous Protector, is now regarded by historians in general as one of the foremost champions of English liberty.

Or heap the shrine of Luxury and Pride
With incense kindled at the Muse's flame.

Far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife,
Their sober wishes never learned to stray;
Along the cool sequestered vale of life
They kept the noiseless tenor of their way.

Yet ev'n these bones from insult to protect,
Some frail memorial still[1] erected nigh,
With uncouth rhymes and shapeless sculpture decked,
Implores the passing tribute of a sigh.

Their name, their years, spelt by th' unlettered Muse,[2]
The place of fame and elegy supply:
And many a holy text around she strews,
That teach the rustic moralist to die.

For who, to dumb Forgetfulness a prey,
This pleasing anxious being e'er resigned,
Left the warm precincts of the cheerful day,
Nor cast one longing, ling'ring look behind?

On some fond breast the parting soul relies,
Some pious drops the closing eye requires;
Ev'n from the tomb the voice of Nature cries,
Ev'n in our ashes live their wonted fires.

1. **Still**, always.

2. **Th' unlettered Muse.** In Greek mythology the Muses were nine goddesses who presided over the arts and sciences, song, and the different kinds of poetry. The true poet was supposed to be inspired by them. Gray imagines a new kind of Muse who inspires the writers of crude epitaphs.

For thee, who mindful of th' unhonored Dead [1]
Dost in these lines their artless tale relate;
If chance,[2] by lonely Contemplation led,
Some kindred spirit shall inquire thy fate,

Haply some hoary-headed swain [3] may say,
"Oft have we seen him at the peep of dawn
Brushing with hasty steps the dews away,
To meet the sun upon the upland lawn.[4]

"There at the foot of yonder nodding beech,
That wreathes its old fantastic roots so high,
His listless length at noontide would he stretch,
And pore upon the brook that babbles by.

"Hard by yon wood, now smiling as in scorn,
Mutt'ring his wayward fancies he would rove;
Now drooping, woeful wan, like one forlorn,
Or crazed with care, or crossed in hopeless love.

"One morn I missed him on the customed hill,
Along the heath and near his fav'rite tree;
Another came; nor yet beside the rill,
Nor up the lawn, nor at the wood was he;

1. **For thee, who mindful, etc.** Gray refers to himself as the writer of this poem.

2. **Chance,** perchance.

3. **Swain,** countryman. By *swain* the poets usually mean a country gallant or lover.

4. **Lawn,** a cleared place in a wood, not cultivated. Now, of course, the word always means grassland near a house which is kept closely cut.

"The next, with dirges due in sad array
Slow thro' the church-way path we saw him borne.
Approach and read (for thou canst read) the lay
Graved on the stone beneath yon aged thorn."

THE EPITAPH

Here rests his head upon the lap of Earth,
A youth to Fortune and to Fame unknown.
Fair Science[1] frowned not on his humble birth,
And Melancholy marked him for her own.

Large was his bounty, and his soul sincere,
Heav'n did a recompense as largely send:
He gave to Mis'ry all he had, a tear,
He gained from Heaven ('t was all he wished) a friend.

No farther seek his merits to disclose,
Or draw his frailties from their dread abode,
(There they alike in trembling hope repose,)
The bosom of his Father and his God.

1. **Science,** knowledge in general, not natural science only.

OLIVER GOLDSMITH

1728–1774

GOLDSMITH was born in Pallas, an out-of-the-way hamlet in Longford County, Ireland, where his father, the curate, was looked upon as "passing rich, with forty pounds a year." Not long after, the family removed to Lissoy, in the County of Westmeath, where they lived in much comfort. Here Oliver passed his childhood and youth, and it is doubtless to Lissoy that his thoughts returned when he wrote of "Sweet Auburn, loveliest village of the plain." As a boy he had his share of troubles. In school he was pronounced "a stupid, heavy blockhead," and he was often made sport of by his companions on account of his awkward figure and his homely face, pitted with the smallpox. In his eighteenth year he entered Trinity College, Dublin, as a sizar, that is, a poor student who pays in part for his tuition by doing certain kinds of work. After four years devoted to study — spiced with a good deal of fun — he graduated at the foot of his class.

At twenty-one he showed no special bent. For a while he lived with his mother, now a widow, and idled his time away with gay companions. After being refused a position in the church, he resolved to try teaching; but this occupation proved so little to his taste that he decided to give it up and study medicine. With the help of a generous uncle he entered the medical school at Edinburgh, leaving Ireland never to return. At the end of a year and a half he

concluded that foreign travel would do more for him than a longer stay in Scotland. His uncle sent him twenty pounds, and with this he reached Leyden, where, if he possibly attended a few lectures, he certainly associated with wild companions who helped him to get rid of his money. Having succeeded in borrowing a small sum, he was about to leave Leyden, when in a florist's garden he saw a rare, high-priced flower which he felt sure would delight his kind uncle, who was an enthusiast in flower culture. Without a thought of his own needs he ran in, bought a parcel of the roots, and sent them off to Ireland; then, with a guinea in his pocket, he started on his travels. Although his uncle may have sent him small sums occasionally, it is not easy to see how he managed to wander as he did from country to country. It is said that he paid his way among the peasants by flute playing, and that he returned the hospitality of convents by disputing on learned subjects; but these stories are doubtless fictitious. One thing is certain, he arrived in London in February, 1756, having reached the age of twenty-eight, with a medical degree, but with no money in his pocket.

For two years he lived in the great city poor and unknown. He was in turn apothecary's assistant, poor physician, proof-reader, usher in a "classical school," and hack writer. At last, almost discouraged, he decided to obtain if possible the position of factory surgeon on the Coromandel coast, in India. He failed to get the place, and was also unsuccessful in his efforts to pass the examination at Surgeon's Hall for the humble post of hospital mate.

At this point there was a turn in the tide of his fortunes. While seeking employment as a physician, he had been engaged upon a work called *Enquiry into the Present State of Polite Learning in Europe*, and with its publication in 1759

his career as an author began. His essays, which appeared in numerous magazines, brought him into further notice, especially a series collected later under the title, *The Citizen of the World.* In 1764 he became a member of Dr. Johnson's famous "Literary Club" that met at the "Turk's Head." It was to Johnson that he once said, alluding to his heavy style, — "If you were to make little fishes talk, they would talk like whales." But there was no malice in this remark, for the doctor was one of his stanch friends. Among the other nine original members of the club were Sir Joshua Reynolds, the artist, and Edmund Burke, the noted statesman. Before long *The Traveller* and *The Deserted Village* gave Goldsmith a foremost place among the poets of the time, and *The Vicar of Wakefield*, published in 1776, brought him fame as a novelist. This book remains to-day, after the lapse of nearly a century and a half, one of the most widely read of English novels. Two comedies, *The Good-natured Man* and *She Stoops to Conquer*, complete the list of his well-known works, while he wrote many others that were enjoyed by his contemporaries. He died of a fever at the age of forty-six, and was buried in the burial ground of the Temple Church. Two years later a monument was erected to his memory in Westminster Abbey.

This short sketch of Goldsmith's life makes it clear that he lacked strength of character and was wanting also in practical wisdom. Even after he became a successful author his extravagance kept him poor, and he died largely in debt. Many stories are told illustrating his innocent vanity and the love of gay clothing which made him conspicuous even in an age of ruffled shirts and silver knee-buckles. One of his biographers describes him as arriving at a friend's house where he was to dine, "with his new wig, with his coat of

Tyrian bloom and blue silk breeches, with a smart sword at his side, his gold-headed cane in his hand, and his hat under his elbow." But while he had more than his share of weaknesses, it must be granted that "e'en his failings leaned to Virtue's side." He was sensitive, open-hearted, generous, and kindly — always ready to help those less fortunate than himself. If in Parson Primrose and in the "village preacher" of *The Traveller* he has painted portraits of his father, the country curate, there is something of himself as well in these lovable characters. Both in poetry and in prose his style is easy and delightful; his humor has no sting. Everything that comes from his pen has the flavor of his quaint personality. In spite of his failings — or possibly in part because of them — this son of Ireland is one of the most popular of English writers.

THE TRAVELLER;

OR, A PROSPECT OF SOCIETY

REMOTE, unfriended, melancholy, slow,
Or by the lazy Scheld [1] or wandering Po;
Or onward, where the rude Carinthian boor [2]
Against the houseless stranger shuts the door;
Or where Campania's plain [3] forsaken lies,
A weary waste expanding to the skies;
Where'er I roam, whatever realms to see,
My heart untravelled fondly turns to thee;
Still to my brother [4] turns, with ceaseless pain,
And drags at each remove a lengthening chain.

NOTE. — Although many of the poet's statements are greatly exaggerated, *The Traveller* is interesting because it contains beautiful descriptions and apt expressions of thought. The verse employed is the heroic couplet, the favorite verse of the eighteenth-century poets. The lines rhyme in pairs, and often a couplet expresses a complete thought. Each line contains five feet, or measures.

1. **Scheld.** The Schelde, or Scheldt, empties into the North Sea, near Antwerp.

2. **Carinthian boor.** Carinthia is a province of Austria.

3. **Campania's plain.** Campania includes, among other districts, the province of Naples.

4. **My brother.** Probably the poet alludes to his elder brother, Henry, who lived in Ireland. To him he is said to have sent the first part of his poem, from Switzerland.

Eternal blessings crown my earliest friend,
And round his dwelling guardian saints attend:
Blest be that spot where cheerful guests retire
To pause from toil, and trim their ev'ning fire:
Blest that abode where want and pain repair,
And every stranger finds a ready chair:
Blest be those feasts, with simple plenty crowned,
Where all the ruddy family around
Laugh at the jests or pranks that never fail,
Or sigh with pity at some mournful tale;
Or press the bashful stranger to his food,
And learn the luxury of doing good.

But me, not destined such delights to share,
My prime of life in wand'ring spent and care;
Impelled, with steps unceasing, to pursue
Some fleeting good that mocks me with the view;
That, like the circle bounding earth and skies,
Allures from far, yet, as I follow, flies;
My fortune leads to traverse realms alone,
And find no spot of all the world my own.

Even now, where Alpine solitudes ascend,
I sit me down a pensive hour to spend;
And placed on high above the storm's career,
Look downward where an hundred realms appear;
Lakes, forests, cities, plains extending wide,
The pomp of kings, the shepherd's humbler pride.

When thus Creation's charms around combine,
Amidst the store should thankless pride repine?
Say, should the philosophic mind disdain
That good which makes each humbler bosom vain?

Let school-taught pride dissemble all it can,[1]
These little things are great to little man;
And wiser he, whose sympathetic mind
Exults in all the good of all mankind.
Ye glitt'ring towns, with wealth and splendor crowned;
Ye fields, where summer spreads profusion round;
Ye lakes, whose vessels catch the busy gale;
Ye bending swains,[2] that dress the flow'ry vale;
For me your tributary stores combine:
Creation's heir, the world, the world is mine.
As some lone miser, visiting his store,
Bends at his treasure, counts, recounts it o'er;
Hoards after hoards his rising raptures fill,
Yet still he sighs, for hoards are wanting still:
Thus to my breast alternate passions rise,
Pleased with each good that Heaven to man supplies:
Yet oft a sigh prevails, and sorrows fall,
To see the hoard of human bliss so small;
And oft I wish amidst the scene to find
Some spot to real happiness consigned,
Where my worn soul, each wand'ring hope at rest,
May gather bliss to see my fellows blest.
But where to find that happiest spot below
Who can direct, when all pretend to know?
The shudd'ring tenant of the frigid zone
Boldly proclaims that happiest spot his own;

1. **Let school-taught pride, etc.** *i.e.* let the philosopher pretend, if he will, that material things are of small importance.

2. **Swains,** a name used by poets for young men living in the country, especially lovers.

Extols the treasures of his stormy seas,
And his long nights of revelry and ease:
The naked negro, panting at the line,[1]
Boasts of his golden sands and palmy wine,
Basks in the glare, or stems the tepid wave,
And thanks his gods for all the good they gave.
Such is the patriot's boast where'er we roam;
His first, best country ever is at home.
And yet, perhaps, if countries we compare,
And estimate the blessings which they share,
Though patriots flatter, still shall wisdom find
An equal portion dealt to all mankind;
As different good, by Art or Nature given,
To different nations makes their blessings even.
Nature, a mother kind alike to all,
Still grants her bliss at Labor's earnest call:
With food as well the peasant is supplied
On Idra's cliffs[2] as Arno's shelvy side;[3]
And though the rocky crested summits frown,
These rocks by custom turn to beds of down.
From Art more various are the blessings sent;
Wealth, commerce, honor, liberty, content.
Yet these each other's power so strong contest,
That either seems destructive of the rest.[4]

1. **The line,** the equinoctial line, the equator.

2. **Idra's cliffs.** Idria is a town among the mountains in Carniola, Austria. Near it are mines of quicksilver.

3. **Arno's shelvy side.** *Shelvy*, or *shelving*, means *sloping gradually.* Florence is on the Arno.

4. **Either seems, etc.** *Either* properly signifies *one of two;* it has occasionally been used for *one of several*, as Goldsmith uses it here.

Where wealth and freedom reign, contentment fails
And honor sinks where commerce long prevails.[1]
Hence every state, to one loved blessing prone,
Conforms and models life to that alone.
Each to the favorite happiness attends,
And spurns the plan that aims at other ends:
Till carried to excess in each domain,
This fav'rite good begets peculiar pain.
But let us try these truths with closer eyes,
And trace them through the prospect as it lies:
Here for a while my proper cares[2] resigned,
Here let me sit in sorrow for mankind;
Like yon neglected shrub at random cast,
That shades the steep, and sighs at every blast.
Far to the right, where Apennine ascends,
Bright as the summer, Italy extends:
Its uplands sloping deck the mountain's side,
Woods over woods in gay theatric pride;
While oft some temple's mould'ring tops between
With venerable grandeur mark the scene.
Could Nature's bounty satisfy the breast,
The sons of Italy were surely blest.
Whatever fruits in different climes were found,
That proudly rise, or humbly court the ground;

1. **And honor sinks, etc.,** a sentiment common in the poet's day, but entertained by few persons in these times. Formerly, in many European countries, trade, even on a large scale, was considered belittling. A gentleman's son might enter the Church, the army, or the navy, but he must not become a merchant.

2. **My proper cares,** my own, my personal cares.

Whatever blooms in torrid tracts appear,
Whose bright succession decks the varied year;
Whatever sweets salute the northern sky
With vernal lives, that blossom but to die;
These, here disporting, own the kindred soil,
Nor ask luxuriance from the planter's toil;
While sea-born gales their gelid[1] wings expand
To winnow[2] fragrance round the smiling land.

But small the bliss that sense alone bestows,
And sensual bliss is all the nation knows.[3]
In florid beauty groves and fields appear;
Man seems the only growth that dwindles here.
Contrasted faults through all his manners reign:
Though poor, luxurious; though submissive, vain;
Though grave, yet trifling; zealous, yet untrue;
And ev'n in penance planning sins anew.
All evils here contaminate the mind
That opulence departed leaves behind;
For wealth was theirs,[4] not far removed the date
When commerce proudly flourished through the state,

1. **Gelid,** cold.

2. **To winnow,** to fan.

3. **Sensual bliss is all the nation knows.** This has never been true of the Italians. At the end of the fifteenth century Italy was the center of European civilization; at the close of the sixteenth she was exhausted and helpless; in 1748, by the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle, she was divided among various European powers; after a long struggle the greater part of the country was united under Victor Emmanuel, who was proclaimed king in 1861. Italy has now, besides elementary and higher schools, twenty-one universities.

4. **For wealth was theirs.** Venice, Genoa, and Florence were cities of great wealth during the latter part of the Middle Ages.

At her command the palace learnt to rise,[1]
Again the long-fallen column sought the skies,[2]
The canvas glowed, beyond e'en nature warm,[3]
The pregnant quarry teemed with human form;
Till, more unsteady than the southern gale,
Commerce on other shores displayed her sail;[4]
While nought remained of all that riches gave,
But towns unmanned, and lords without a slave:
And late the nation found with fruitless skill
Its former strength was but plethoric ill.[5]
Yet still the loss of wealth is here supplied
By arts, the splendid wrecks of former pride;
From these the feeble heart and long-fall'n mind
An easy compensation seem to find.
Here may be seen, in bloodless pomp arrayed,

1. **The palace learnt to rise.** Beside palaces, there are in Italy many noted buildings which the poet must have seen. Among these are St. Peter's in Rome, the cathedral in Milan, and St. Mark's in Venice.

2. **Again the long-fallen column, etc.** When architecture began to flourish anew in Italy, early in the Middle Ages, many of the columns used were taken from the ruins of buildings erected during the days of the Roman Empire.

3. **The canvas glowed.** Giotto, born about 1266, was one of the first of the Italian painters who gained distinction. Later came Leonardo da Vinci, Raphael, Michelangelo, Titian, and many others. Michelangelo (1475–1564) was sculptor, architect, and writer, as well as painter. Benvenuto Cellini, born in 1500, was noted as goldsmith, sculptor, and writer.

4. **More unsteady than the southern gale, etc.** The discovery of America and the opening of a route to India by the way of the Cape of Good Hope, seriously affected the commerce of the Italian seaports.

5. **Plethoric ill,** ill caused by excess.

The paste-board triumph and the cavalcade,
Processions formed for piety and love,
A mistress or a saint in every grove.
By sports like these are all their cares beguiled;
The sports of children satisfy the child.
Each nobler aim, repressed by long control,
Now sinks at last, or feebly mans the soul;
While low delights, succeeding fast behind,
In happier meanness occupy the mind:
As in those domes where Cæsars[1] once bore sway,
Defaced by time and tottering in decay,
There in the ruin, heedless of the dead,
The shelter-seeking peasant builds his shed;
And, wond'ring man could want the larger pile,
Exults, and owns his cottage with a smile.
My soul, turn from them, turn we to survey,
Where rougher climes a nobler race display;
Where the bleak Swiss their stormy mansions tread,
And force a churlish soil[2] for scanty bread.
No product here the barren hills afford,
But man and steel, the soldier and his sword:[3]
No vernal blooms their torpid rocks array,
But winter ling'ring chills the lap of May:

1. **Cæsars.** The name *Cæsar* was assumed by all the Roman emperors. *Kaiser* and *tsar*, or *czar*, come from the word.

2. **A churlish soil.** Nearly three-quarters of the soil of Switzerland is productive.

3. **The soldier and his sword.** In former times the Swiss frequently served as soldiers in different European countries as a means of earning a living. Many monarchs had Swiss guards for their personal safety.

No Zephyr fondly sues the mountain's breast,
But meteors glare, and stormy glooms invest.
Yet, still, even here content can spread a charm,
Redress the clime, and all its rage disarm.
Though poor the peasant's hut, his feasts tho' small,
He sees his little lot the lot of all;
Sees no contiguous palace[1] rear its head
To shame the meanness of his humble shed;
No costly lord the sumptuous banquet deal
To make him loath his vegetable meal;
But calm, and bred in ignorance and toil,[2]
Each wish contracting fits him to the soil.
Cheerful at morn he wakes from short repose,
Breathes the keen air, and carols as he goes;
With patient angle trolls the finny deep;
Or drives his venturous plowshare to the steep;
Or seeks the den where snow-tracks mark the way,
And drags the struggling savage[3] into day.
At night returning, every labor sped,
He sits him down the monarch of a shed;
Smiles by his cheerful fire, and round surveys
His children's looks, that brighten at the blaze;
While his loved partner, boastful of her hoard,
Displays her cleanly platter on the board:

1. **Sees no contiguous palace.** The peasant now sees hotels, if not palaces. The Swiss hotels, like the Swiss roads, are among the best in the world.

2. **Bred in ignorance and toil.** Switzerland has at present, beside lower schools, seven institutions of higher learning, five of which are universities.

3. **Savage,** savage beast. Few of these can be found in Switzerland now.

And haply too some pilgrim, thither led,
With many a tale repays the nightly bed.[1]
Thus every good his native wilds impart
Imprints the patriot passion on his heart;
And ev'n those ills that round his mansion rise
Enhance the bliss his scanty fund supplies.
Dear is that shed to which his soul conforms,
And dear that hill which lifts him to the storms;
And as a child, when scaring sounds molest,
Clings close and closer to the mother's breast,
So the loud torrent and the whirlwind's roar
But bind him to his native mountains more.
Such are the charms to barren states assigned;[2]
Their wants but few, their wishes all confined.
Yet let them only share the praises due:
If few their wants, their pleasures are but few;
For every want that stimulates the breast
Becomes a source of pleasure when redressed;
Whence from such lands each pleasing science flies
That first excites desire, and then supplies;
Unknown to them, when sensual pleasures cloy,
To fill the languid pause with finer joy;
Unknown those powers that raise the soul to flame,
Catch every nerve, and vibrate through the frame.
Their level life is but a smould'ring fire,

1. **With many a tale, etc.** Possibly the poet alludes to his own experiences.

2. **Such are the charms, etc.** In this and the following lines the poet paints a picture that has not for centuries been true of the Swiss as a people. Their principal cities have long been centers of refinement and of intellectual activity.

Unquenched by want, unfanned by strong desire;
Unfit for raptures, or, if raptures cheer
On some high festival of once a year,
In wild excess the vulgar breast takes fire,
Till, buried in debauch, the bliss expire.

But not their joys alone thus coarsely flow:
Their morals, like their pleasures, are but low;
For, as refinement stops, from sire to son
Unaltered, unimproved, the manners run,
And love's and friendship's finely-pointed dart
Fall blunted from each indurated heart.
Some sterner virtues o'er the mountain's breast
May sit, like falcons, cow'ring on the nest;
But all the gentler morals, such as play
Thro' life's more cultured walks, and charm the way,
These, far dispersed, on timorous pinions fly,
To sport and flutter in a kinder sky.

To kinder skies, where gentler manners reign,
I turn; and France displays her bright domain.
Gay, sprightly land of mirth and social ease,
Pleased with thyself, whom all the world can please,
How often have I led thy sportive choir,
With tuneless pipe, beside the murmuring Loire?
Where shading elms along the margin grew,
And freshened from the wave the Zephyr flew;
And haply, though my harsh touch, faltering still,
But mocked all tune, and marred the dancer's skill,
Yet would the village praise my wonderous power,
And dance, forgetful of the noontide hour.
Alike all ages. Dames of ancient days

Have led their children through the mirthful maze,
And the gay grandsire, skilled in gestic lore,[1]
Has frisked beneath the burthen of threescore.
So blest a life these thoughtless realms display;
Thus idly busy rolls their world away;[2]
Theirs are those arts that mind to mind endear,
For honor forms the social temper here.
Honor, that praise which real merit gains,
Or even imaginary worth obtains,
Here passes current: paid from hand to hand,
It shifts in splendid traffic round the land;
From courts to camps, to cottages, it strays,
And all are taught an avarice of praise.
They please, are pleased; they give to get esteem;
Till, seeming blest, they grow to what they seem.
But while this softer art their bliss supplies,
It gives their follies also room to rise;
For praise too dearly loved, or warmly sought,
Enfeebles all internal strength of thought,
And the weak soul, within itself unblest,
Leans for all pleasure on another's breast.
Hence ostentation here, with tawdry art,
Pants for the vulgar praise which fools impart;
Here vanity assumes her pert grimace,

1. **Gestic lore,** the art of dancing.

2. **Thus idly busy, etc.** The French peasant has always been noted for his industry and economy. This picture was drawn before the French revolution, when the lower classes were miserably poor and the nobles reckless in their extravagance. France has now a remarkable system of public instruction and many large institutions of higher learning. In matters where taste is concerned she still leads the world.

And trims her robes of frieze[1] with copper lace;
Here beggar pride defrauds her daily cheer,
To boast one splendid banquet once a year;
The mind still turns where shifting fashion draws,
Nor weighs the solid worth of self-applause.
  To men of other minds my fancy flies,
Embosomed in the deep where Holland[2] lies.
Methinks her patient sons before me stand,
Where the broad ocean leans against the land,
And, sedulous to stop the coming tide,
Lift the tall rampire's[3] artificial pride.
Onward methinks, and diligently slow,
The firm connected bulwark seems to grow;
Spreads its long arms amidst the wat'ry roar,
Scoops out an empire, and usurps the shore.
While the pent ocean, rising o'er the pile,
Sees an amphibious world beneath him smile:
The slow canal, the yellow blossomed vale,
The willow tufted bank, the gliding sail,
The crowded mart, the cultivated plain, —
A new creation rescued from his reign.
  Thus while around the wave-subjected soil
Impels the native to repeated toil,
Industrious habits in each bosom reign,
And industry begets a love of gain.
Hence all the good from opulence that springs,[4]

1. **Frieze,** coarse woolen cloth.

2. **Holland** is now known as The Netherlands. The sovereign is the young queen Wilhelmina, who began to reign in 1898.

3. **Rampire,** a dam or dike.

4. **From opulence that springs.** Holland was a great commercial

With all those ills superfluous treasure brings,
Are here displayed. Their much-loved wealth imparts
Convenience, plenty, elegance, and arts:
But view them closer, craft and fraud appear;
E'en liberty itself is bartered here.
At gold's superior charms all freedom flies;
The needy sell it, and the rich man buys;
A land of tyrants and a den of slaves,
Here wretches seek dishonorable graves,
And calmly bent, to servitude conform,
Dull as their lakes that slumber in the storm.[1]
Heavens! how unlike their Belgic sires[2] of old,
Rough, poor, content, ungovernably bold;
War in each breast, and freedom on each brow:
How much unlike the sons of Britain now!
Fired at the sound, my genius spreads her wing,
And flies where Britain courts the western spring;
Where lawns[3] extend that scorn Arcadian pride,[4]
And brighter streams than famed Hydaspis[5] glide.

power during the seventh century; then her commerce dwindled, and after 1713 she was of small political importance. Of course the poet's description is greatly exaggerated.

1. **Dull as their lakes.** The Netherlands can at present boast of four public universities.

2. **Belgic sires.** *Belgæ* was the name given to the early inhabitants of Holland and certain regions near that country.

3. **Lawns,** cleared places in a wood; not cultivated grassland near a house, as now.

4. **Arcadian pride.** Arcadia is an inland country in Greece, often mentioned by poets as a place of ideal beauty.

5. **Famed Hydaspis.** The river Jhelum, or Jhelam, in India, about which many fabulous stories used to be told. One was, that its sands were of gold.

There all around the gentlest breezes stray;
There gentle music melts on every spray;
Creation's mildest charms are there combined,
Extremes are only in the master's mind!
Stern o'er each bosom Reason holds her state,
With daring aims irregularly great;
Pride in their port, defiance in their eye,
I see the lords of human kind pass by;
Intent on high designs, a thoughtful band,
By forms unfashioned, fresh from Nature's hand,
Fierce in their native hardiness of soul,
True to imagined right, above control,
While even the peasant boasts these rights to scan,
And learns to venerate himself as man.

Thine, Freedom, thine the blessings pictured here;
Thine are those charms that dazzle and endear:
Too blest indeed, were such without alloy:
But fostered even by Freedom ills annoy:
That independence Britons prize too high
Keeps man from man, and breaks the social tie;
The self-dependent lordlings[1] stand alone,
All claims that bind and sweeten life unknown.
Here, by the bonds of nature feebly held,
Minds combat minds, repelling and repelled;[2]
Ferments arise, imprisoned factions roar,

1. **The self-dependent lordlings.** Probably in no country in the world have the nobility been so popular as in England. It has been said that an Englishman "dearly loves a lord."

2. **Repelling and repelled.** Goldsmith, who grew up among the warm-hearted people of Lissoy, was doubtless often hurt by the apparent coldness of his English friends.

Repressed ambition struggles round her shore,
Till, over-wrought, the general system feels
Its motions stop, or frenzy fire the wheels.
Nor this the worst. As nature's ties decay,
As duty, love, and honor fail to sway,
Fictitious bonds, the bonds of wealth and law,
Still gather strength, and force unwilling awe.
Hence all obedience bows to these alone,
And talent sinks, and merit weeps unknown:
Till time may come, when, stripped of all her charms,
The land of scholars and the nurse of arms,
Where noble stems transmit the patriot flame,
Where kings have toiled and poets wrote for fame,
One sink of level avarice [1] shall lie,
And scholars, soldiers, kings, unhonored die.
Yet think not, thus when Freedom's ills I state,
I mean to flatter kings, or court the great:
Ye powers of truth that bid my soul aspire,
Far from my bosom drive the low desire.
And thou, fair Freedom, taught alike to feel
The rabble's rage and tyrant's angry steel;
Thou transitory flower, alike undone
By proud contempt or favor's fostering sun,
Still may thy blooms the changeful clime endure!
I only would repress them to secure:
For just experience tells, in every soil,

1. **One sink of level avarice.** At the time *The Traveller* was written many noted English statesmen had low moral standards and were willing to use corrupt means to gain their ends. Still, the great body of the people were but slightly affected by this state of things, and England was soon to enter upon a new and better era.

That those who think must govern those that toil;[1]
And all that Freedom's highest aims can reach
Is but to lay proportioned loads on each.
Hence, should one order disproportioned grow,
Its double weight must ruin all below.

O then how blind to all that truth requires,
Who think it freedom when a part aspires!
Calm is my soul, nor apt to rise in arms,
Except when fast approaching danger warms;
But when contending chiefs blockade the throne,
Contracting regal power to stretch their own,
When I behold a factious band agree
To call it freedom when themselves are free,
Each wanton judge new penal statutes draw,
Laws grind the poor, and rich men rule the law,[2]
The wealth of climes where savage nations roam[3]
Pillaged from slaves to purchase slaves at home,
Fear, pity, justice, indignation start,
Tear off reserve, and bare my swelling heart;
Till half a patriot, half a coward grown,
I fly from petty tyrants to the throne.

Yes, brother, curse with me that baleful hour
When first ambition struck at regal power;

1. **Those who think, etc.** Americans believe that the thinkers should toil and the toilers think. When Goldsmith's line was written great ignorance prevailed among the working classes in all European countries.

2. **Rich men rule the law.** Bribery was common in England at this time. Although conditions gradually improved, many abuses remained until they were swept away by the famous Reform Bill of 1832.

3. **The wealth of climes, etc.** It will be remembered that England was having serious trouble at the time this poem was written, both with the people of India and with the American colonists.

And thus polluting honor in its source,
Gave wealth to sway the mind with double force.
Have we not seen, round Britain's peopled shore,
Her useful sons exchanged for useless ore;[1]
Seen all her triumphs but destruction haste,
Like flaring tapers brightening as they waste?
Seen opulence, her grandeur to maintain,
Lead stern depopulation in her train,
And over fields where scattered hamlets rose
In barren solitary pomp repose?
Have we not seen at pleasure's lordly call
The smiling long-frequented village fall?
Beheld the duteous son, the sire decayed,[2]
The modest matron, and the blushing maid,
Forced from their homes, a melancholy train,[3]
To traverse climes beyond the western main;
Where wild Oswego[4] spreads her swamps around,
And Niagara[4] stuns with thund'ring sound?
Even now, perhaps, as there some pilgrim strays
Through tangled forests and through dangerous ways,
Where beasts with man divided empire claim,
And the brown Indian marks with murderous aim;
There, while above the giddy tempest flies,
And all around distressful yells arise,

1. **Her useful sons, etc.** The slave trade was not abolished in the British Empire until 1807.

2. **Decayed,** fallen as to social condition.

3. **Forced from their homes.** Many Englishmen came to America willingly. The poet fails to understand the adventurous spirit of the emigrant.

4. **Oswego; Niagara.** At this time the regions named were in the wilderness. Note the poet's pronunciation of *Niagara*.

The pensive exile, bending with his woe,
To stop too fearful, and too faint to go,
Casts a long look where England's glories shine,
And bids his bosom sympathize with mine.
Vain, very vain, my weary search to find
That bliss which only centers in the mind:
Why have I strayed from pleasure and repose,
To seek a good each government bestows?[1]
In every government, though terrors reign,
Though tyrant kings or tyrant laws restrain,
How small, of all that human hearts endure,
That part which laws or kings can cause or cure;
Still to ourselves in every place consigned,
Our own felicity we make or find:
With secret course, which no loud storms annoy,
Glides the smooth current of domestic joy.
The lifted ax, the agonizing wheel,
Luke's iron crown,[2] and Damiens' bed of steel,[3]
To men remote from power but rarely known,
Leave reason, faith, and conscience all our own.

1. **A good each government bestows.** It would not be easy to mention the special good bestowed by certain governments; by that of Turkey, for instance.

2. **Luke's iron crown.** George Dosia, with his brother Luke, headed an unsuccessful revolt in Hungary in the sixteenth century. George — not Luke — was put to death by means of a red-hot iron crown. In the Middle Ages this punishment was sometimes employed in the case of persons who had attempted to seize the royal power.

3. **Damiens' bed of steel.** Robert François Damiens attempted to assassinate Louis XV in 1757. Before being put to death he was cruelly tortured, but the "bed of steel" was not used.

THE DESERTED VILLAGE

SWEET AUBURN! loveliest village of the plain;
Where health and plenty cheered the laboring swain,
Where smiling spring its earliest visit paid,
And parting summer's lingering blooms delayed:
Dear lovely bowers of innocence and ease,
Seats of my youth, when every sport could please,
How often have I loitered o'er thy green,
Where humble happiness endeared each scene!
How often have I paused on every charm,
The sheltered cot, the cultivated farm,
The never-failing brook, the busy mill,
The decent[1] church that topped the neighboring hill,
The hawthorn bush, with seats beneath the shade,
For talking age and whispering lovers made!
How often have I blessed the coming day,
When toil remitting lent its turn to play,

NOTE.—*The Deserted Village*, published in 1770, was immediately popular, and to-day few English poems are so widely read or so often quoted. If the poet had in mind any special place when writing of "Sweet Auburn," it was probably Lissoy, in Ireland, where he grew up; but the village of his imagination is lovelier than any actual spot, and there is no use in hunting for it on the map. See the first note on *The Traveller* for remarks on metre, etc.

1. **Decent**, appropriate, fitting. Consult the dictionary for the present meanings of the word.

And all the village train, from labor free,
Led up their sports beneath the spreading tree,
While many a pastime circled in the shade,
The young contending as the old surveyed;
And many a gambol frolicked o'er the ground,
And sleights of art and feats of strength went round.
And still, as each repeated pleasure tired,
Succeeding sports the mirthful band inspired;
The dancing pair that simply sought renown
By holding out to tire each other down;
The swain mistrustless of his smutted face,
While secret laughter tittered round the place;
The bashful virgin's sidelong looks of love,
The matron's glance that would those looks reprove.
These were thy charms, sweet village! sports like these,
With sweet succession, taught even toil to please:
These round thy bowers their cheerful influence shed:
These were thy charms — but all these charms are fled.
Sweet smiling village, loveliest of the lawn,[1]
Thy sports are fled, and all thy charms withdrawn;
Amidst thy bowers the tyrant's hand is seen,
And desolation saddens all thy green:
One only master[2] grasps the whole domain,
And half a tillage stints thy smiling plain.

1. **Lawn,** a cleared space in a wood.

2. **One only master, etc.** Sometimes, in England or in Ireland, a wealthy man would buy a large tract of land, pull down the houses, and turn the entire region into parks or hunting grounds. Such a man was not necessarily a tyrant. In many cases the villages demolished were deserted because the inhabitants had left them to seek more comfortable homes across the ocean.

No more thy glassy brook reflects the day,
But, choked with sedges, works its weedy way;
Along thy glades, a solitary guest,
The hollow sounding bittern guards its nest;
Amidst thy desert walks the lapwing flies,
And tires their echoes with unvaried cries;
Sunk are thy bowers in shapeless ruin all,
And the long grass o'ertops the mouldering wall;
And trembling, shrinking from the spoiler's hand,
Far, far away thy children leave the land.

Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey,
Where wealth accumulates, and men decay:[1]
Princes and lords may flourish, or may fade;
A breath can make them, as a breath has made:[2]
But a bold peasantry, their country's pride,
When once destroyed, can never be supplied.

A time there was, ere England's griefs began,[3]
When every rood of ground maintained its man;
For him light labor spread her wholesome store,

1. **Decay,** *i.e.* deteriorate, lose their high moral character. Although this is not the inevitable consequence of great wealth, it is certainly one of its dangers.

2. **A breath can make them.** *Breath* was used by older writers in the sense of *words*. The poet's meaning is, that kings can easily make new lords by conferring titles upon their favorites. This was a common practice in former times. Now, in England, titles are usually given as a reward for distinguished merit, as in the case of Alfred Lord Tennyson, the famous poet.

3. **Ere England's griefs began.** The student of history finds that there never was such a time. Although there are serious evils in all civilized countries to-day, especially in the condition of the poorest people in large cities, the workingman is, on the whole, far better off than he was hundreds of years ago, or even at the beginning of the nineteenth century.

Just gave what life required, but gave no more:
His best companions, innocence and health;
And his best riches, ignorance of wealth.
But times are altered; trade's unfeeling train
Usurp the land and dispossess the swain;
Along the lawn, where scattered hamlets rose,
Unwieldy wealth and cumbrous pomp repose,
And every want to opulence allied,
And every pang that folly pays to pride.
These gentle hours that plenty bade to bloom,
Those calm desires that asked but little room,
Those healthful sports that graced the peaceful scene,
Lived in each look, and brightened all the green;
These, far departing, seek a kinder shore,
And rural mirth and manners are no more.
Sweet Auburn! parent of the blissful hour,
Thy glades forlorn confess the tyrant's power.
Here, as I take my solitary rounds
Amidst thy tangling walks and ruined grounds,
And, many a year elapsed, return to view
Where once the cottage stood, the hawthorn grew,
Remembrance wakes with all her busy train,
Swells at my breast, and turns the past to pain.
In all my wanderings round this world of care,
In all my griefs — and GOD has given my share —
I still had hopes, my latest hours to crown,
Amidst these humble bowers to lay me down;
To husband out[1] life's taper at the close,

1. **To husband out, to use or manage with economy. The *out* is superfluous in prose.**

And keep the flame from wasting by repose:
I still had hopes, for pride attends us still,
Amidst the swains to show my book-learned skill,
Around my fire an evening group to draw,
And tell of all I felt, and all I saw;
And, as an hare[1] whom hounds and horns pursue
Pants to[2] the place from whence at first she flew,
I still had hopes, my long vexations past,
Here to return — and die at home at last.

O blest retirement, friend to life's decline,
Retreats from care, that never must be mine,
How happy he who crowns in shades like these
A youth of labor with an age of ease;
Who quits a world where strong temptations try,
And, since 't is hard to combat, learns to fly!
For him no wretches, born to work and weep,
Explore the mine, or tempt the dangerous deep;
No surly porter stands in guilty state,[3]
To spurn imploring famine from the gate;
But on he moves to meet his latter end,
Angels around befriending Virtue's friend;
Bends to the grave with unperceived decay,
While resignation gently slopes the way;

1. **An hare.** *An* was formerly used before words beginning with *h*, even when that letter was sounded, and also before words beginning with a vowel.

2. **Pants to,** eagerly longs for.

3. **No surly porter, etc.** While the poet was exaggerating when he said this, nevertheless it is true that the feeling of responsibility for the poor and the unfortunate was less widespread among the well-to-do in his day than it is now.

And, all his prospects brightening to the last,
His heaven commences ere the world be past!
Sweet was the sound, when oft at evening's close
Up yonder hill the village murmur rose.
There, as I passed with careless steps and slow,
The mingling notes came softened from below;
The swain responsive as the milk-maid sung,
The sober herd that lowed to meet their young,
The noisy geese that gabbled o'er the pool,
The playful children just let loose from school,
The watch-dog's voice that bayed the whispering wind,
And the loud laugh that spoke the vacant mind;—
These all in sweet confusion sought the shade,
And filled each pause the nightingale had made.
But now the sounds of population fail,
No cheerful murmurs fluctuate in the gale,
No busy steps the grass-grown foot-way tread,
For all the bloomy flush of life is fled.
All but yon widowed, solitary thing,
That feebly bends beside the plashy spring:
She, wretched matron, forced in age, for bread,
To strip the brook with mantling cresses spread,
To pick her wintry faggot from the thorn,
To seek her nightly shed, and weep till morn;
She only left of all the harmless train,
The sad historian of the pensive plain.
Near yonder copse, where once the garden smiled,
And still where many a garden flower grows wild;
There, where a few torn shrubs the place disclose,

The village preacher's modest mansion rose.[1]
A man he was to all the country dear,
And passing[2] rich with forty pounds a year;
Remote from towns he ran his godly race,
Nor e'er had changed, nor wished to change his place;
Unpracticed he to fawn, or seek for power,
By doctrines fashioned to the varying hour;[3]
Far other aims his heart had learned to prize,
More skilled to raise the wretched than to rise.
His house was known to all the vagrant train;
He chid their wanderings but relieved their pain:
The long remembered beggar was his guest,
Whose beard descending swept his aged breast;
The ruined spendthrift, now no longer proud,
Claimed kindred there, and had his claims allowed;
The broken soldier, kindly bade to stay,
Sat by his fire, and talked the night away,
Wept o'er his wounds or tales of sorrow done,
Shouldered his crutch and shewed how fields were won.
Pleased with his guests, the good man learned to glow,
And quite forgot their vices in their woe;

1. **The village preacher's, etc.** There is no doubt that the poet was thinking of his own father when he drew the sketch that follows — one of the most charming character sketches in English literature. To find its like in poetry one must go back to Chaucer's picture of the "poor parson" in the *Prologue to the Canterbury Tales*. Goldsmith's "village preacher" first appeared in the *Vicar of Wakefield*, in that delightful character, Parson Primrose.

2. **Passing,** surpassingly.

3. **Unpracticed he, etc.** Clergymen have in some instances changed their creeds to gain favor with those in authority.

Careless their merits or their faults to scan,
His pity gave ere charity began.[1]
Thus to relieve the wretched was his pride,
And e'en his failings leaned to Virtue's side;
But in his duty prompt at every call,
He watched and wept, he prayed and felt for all;
And, as a bird each fond endearment tries
To tempt its new-fledged offspring to the skies,
He tried each art, reproved each dull delay,
Allured to brighter worlds, and led the way.
Beside the bed where parting life was laid,
And sorrow, guilt, and pain by turns dismayed,
The reverend champion stood. At his control
Despair and anguish fled the struggling soul;[2]
Comfort came down the trembling wretch to raise,
And his last faltering accents whispered praise.
At church, with meek and unaffected grace,
His looks adorned the venerable place;
Truth from his lips prevailed with double sway,
And fools, who came to scoff, remained to pray.
The service past, around the pious man,
With steady zeal, each honest rustic ran;
Even children followed with endearing wile,
And plucked his gown to share the good man's smile.
His ready smile a parent's warmth expressed;
Their welfare pleased him, and their cares distressed:
To them his heart, his love, his griefs were given,

1. **His pity gave, etc.,** *i.e.* he gave from warm human sympathy rather than from a religious, and perhaps a colder, sentiment.

2. **Fled the struggling soul.** *Fled* is sometimes used transitively by older writers.

But all his serious thoughts had rest in heaven.
As some tall cliff that lifts its awful form,[1]
Swells from the vale, and midway leaves the storm,
Tho' round its breast the rolling clouds are spread,
Eternal sunshine settles on its head.

Beside yon straggling fence that skirts the way,
With blossomed furze unprofitably gay,
There, in his noisy mansion, skilled to rule,
The village master taught his little school.
A man severe he was, and stern to view;
I knew him well, and every truant knew:
Well had the boding tremblers learned to trace
The day's disasters in his morning face;
Full well they laughed with counterfeited glee
At all his jokes, for many a joke had he;
Full well the busy whisper circling round
Conveyed the dismal tidings when he frowned.
Yet he was kind, or, if severe in aught,
The love he bore to learning was in fault;
The village all declared how much he knew:
'T was certain he could write, and cypher[2] too;
Lands he could measure, terms and tides presage,[3]
And even the story ran that he could gauge:[4]

1. **Awful form.** Notice how effective *awful* is when properly used.

2. **Cypher,** do sums in arithmetic; not often used now.

3. **Terms and tides presage,** *i.e.* the schoolmaster could tell when courts were to be held and when certain tides (times), such as Whitsuntide or Easter, would come.

4. **Gauge,** measure. The word is applied especially to determining the capacity of casks and other vessels containing alcoholic liquors. These had to be carefully measured, so that the government should receive the specified tax.

In arguing, too, the parson owned his skill,
For, even though vanquished, he could argue still;
While words of learned length and thundering sound
Amazed the gazing rustics ranged around;
And still they gazed, and still the wonder grew,
That one small head could carry all he knew.

But past is all his fame. The very spot
Where many a time he triumphed is forgot.
Near yonder thorn, that lifts its head on high,
Where once the sign-post caught the passing eye,
Low lies that house where nut-brown draughts inspired,
Where grey-beard mirth and smiling toil retired,
Where village statesmen talked with looks profound,
And news much older than their ale went round.
Imagination fondly stoops to trace
The parlor splendors of that festive place:
The white-washed wall, the nicely sanded floor,
The varnished clock that clicked behind the door;
The chest contrived a double debt to pay,
A bed by night, a chest of drawers by day;
The pictures placed for ornament and use,
The twelve good rules,[1] the royal game of goose;
The hearth, except when winter chilled the day,
With aspen boughs and flowers and fennel gay;
While broken tea-cups, wisely kept for shew,
Ranged o'er the chimney, glistened in a row.

Vain transitory splendors! could not all

1. **The twelve good rules.** Among these are: "Reveal no secrets," "Keep no bad company." They can be found in Hales' *Longer English Poems*, p. 353.

Reprieve the tottering mansion from its fall?
Obscure it sinks, nor shall it more impart
An hour's importance to the poor man's heart.
Thither no more the peasant shall repair
To sweet oblivion of his daily care;
No more the farmer's news, the barber's tale,
No more the woodman's ballad shall prevail;
No more the smith his dusky brow shall clear,
Relax his ponderous strength, and lean to hear;
The host himself no longer shall be found
Careful to see the mantling bliss go round;
Nor the coy maid, half willing to be pressed,
Shall kiss the cup to pass it to the rest.

Yes! let the rich deride, the proud disdain,
These simple blessings of the lowly train;
To me more dear, congenial to my heart,
One native charm, than all the gloss of art;
Spontaneous joys, where Nature has its play,
The soul adopts, and owns their firstborn sway;
Lightly they frolic o'er the vacant mind,
Unenvied, unmolested, unconfined.
But the long pomp, the midnight masquerade,
With all the freaks of wanton wealth arrayed —
In these, ere triflers half their wish obtain,
The toiling pleasure sickens into pain;
And, e'en while fashion's brightest arts decoy,
The heart distrusting asks if this be joy.

Ye friends to truth, ye statesman who survey
The rich man's joys increase, the poor's decay,
'T is yours to judge how wide the limits stand

Between a splendid and an happy land.
Proud swells the tide with loads of freighted ore,
And shouting Folly hails them from her shore;
Hoards e'en beyond the miser's wish abound,[1]
And rich men flock from all the world around.
Yet count our gains. This wealth is but a name
That leaves our useful products still the same.
Not so the loss. The man of wealth and pride
Takes up a space that many poor supplied;
Space for his lake, his park's extended bounds,
Space for his horses, equipage, and hounds:
The robe that wraps his limbs in silken sloth
Has robbed the neighboring fields of half their growth;[2]
His seat, where solitary sports are seen,
Indignant spurns the cottage from the green:
Around the world each needful product flies,
For all the luxuries the world supplies;
While thus the land adorned for pleasure all
In barren splendor feebly waits the fall.

As some fair female unadorned and plain,
Secure to please while youth confirms her reign,
Slights every borrowed charm that dress supplies,
Nor shares with art the triumph of her eyes;
But when those charms are past, for charms are frail,

1. **Hoards e'en beyond, etc.** Goldsmith did not dream of such immense fortunes as those possessed by the richest men of to-day.

2. **The robe that wraps.** Although there is apparently no way of making everybody comfortable in this world, some wise thinkers believe that in future ages there will be less poverty and wretchedness than there is now, and perhaps less extravagance.

When time advances, and when lovers fail,
She then shines forth, solicitous to bless,
In all the glaring impotence of dress.
Thus fares the land by luxury betrayed:
In nature's simplest charms at first arrayed,
But verging to decline, its splendors rise;
Its vistas strike, its palaces surprise:
While, scourged by famine from the smiling land,
The mournful peasant leads his humble band,
And while he sinks, without one arm to save,
The country blooms — a garden and a grave.
Where then, ah! where, shall poverty reside,
To scape the pressure of contiguous pride?
If to some common's fenceless limits strayed
He drives his flock to pick the scanty blade,
Those fenceless fields the sons of wealth divide,
And even the bare-worn common is denied.
If to the city sped — what waits him there?
To see profusion that he must not share;
To see ten thousand baneful arts combined
To pamper luxury, and thin mankind;[1]
To see those joys the sons of pleasure know
Extorted from his fellow-creature's woe.
Here while the courtier glitters in brocade,
There the pale artist plies the sickly trade;
Here while the proud their long-drawn pomps display,
There the black gibbet glooms beside the way.
The dome where pleasure holds her midnight reign

1. **Profusion that he must not share.** To-day, in cities, schools, libraries, and parks are open to the poorest.

Here, richly decked, admits the gorgeous train:
Tumultuous grandeur crowds the blazing square,
The rattling chariots clash, the torches glare.
Sure scenes like these no troubles e'er annoy!
Sure these denote one universal joy!
Are these thy serious thoughts? — Ah, turn thine eyes
Where the poor houseless shivering female lies.
She once, perhaps, in village plenty blessed,
Has wept at tales of innocence distressed;
Her modest looks the cottage might adorn,
Sweet as the primrose peeps beneath the thorn:
Now lost to all; her friends, her virtue fled,
Near her betrayer's door she lays her head,
And, pinched with cold, and shrinking from the shower,
With heavy heart deplores that luckless hour,
When idly first, ambitious of the town,
She left her wheel and robes of country brown.
Do thine, sweet Auburn, — thine, the loveliest train, —
Do thy fair tribes participate[1] her pain?
Even now, perhaps, by cold and hunger led,
At proud men's doors they ask a little bread!
Ah, no! To distant climes, a dreary scene,
Where half the convex world intrudes between,
Through torrid tracts with fainting steps they go,
Where wild Altama[2] murmurs to their woe.
Far different there from all that charmed before
The various terrors of that horrid shore;

1. **Participate,** share.
2. **Altama,** the Altamaha, a river in Georgia.

Those blazing suns that dart a downward ray,
And fiercely shed intolerable day;
Those matted woods, where birds forget to sing,
But silent bats in drowsy clusters cling;
Those poisonous fields with rank luxuriance crowned,
Where the dark scorpion gathers death around;
Where at each step the stranger fears to wake
The rattling terrors of the vengeful snake;
Where crouching tigers [1] wait their hapless prey,
And savage men more murderous still than they;
While oft in whirls the mad tornado flies,
Mingling the ravaged landscape with the skies.
Far different these from every former scene,
The cooling brook, the grassy vested green,
The breezy covert of the warbling grove,
That only sheltered thefts of harmless love.

Good Heaven! what sorrows gloomed that parting day,
That called them from their native walks away;
When the poor exiles, every pleasure past,
Hung round the bowers, and fondly looked their last,
And took a long farewell, and wished in vain
For seats like these beyond the western main,
And shuddering still to face the distant deep,
Returned and wept, and still returned to weep.
The good old sire the first prepared to go
To new found worlds, and wept for others' woe;
But for himself, in conscious virtue brave,
He only wished for worlds beyond the grave.

1. **Crouching tigers.** It is evident that the poet is indulging his imagination. The people of Georgia doubtless find this description of their country amusing if not accurate.

His lovely daughter, lovelier in her tears,
The fond companion of his helpless years,
Silent went next, neglectful of her charms,
And left a lover's for a father's arms.
With louder plaints the mother spoke her woes,
And blessed the cot where every pleasure rose,
And kissed her thoughtless babes with many a tear,
And clasped them close, in sorrow doubly dear,
Whilst her fond husband strove to lend relief
In all the silent manliness of grief.
O luxury! thou cursed by Heaven's decree,
How ill exchanged are things like these for thee!
How do thy potions, with insidious joy,
Diffuse their pleasure only to destroy!
Kingdoms by thee, to sickly greatness grown,
Boast of a florid vigor not their own.
At every draught more large and large they grow,
A bloated mass of rank unwieldy woe;
Till sapped their strength, and every part unsound,
Down, down they sink, and spread a ruin round.
Even now the devastation is begun,
And half the business of destruction done;
Even now, methinks, as pondering here I stand,
I see the rural virtues leave the land.
Down where yon anchoring vessel spreads the sail,
That idly waiting flaps with every gale,
Downward they move, a melancholy band,
Pass from the shore, and darken all the strand.
Contented toil, and hospitable care,
And kind connubial tenderness, are there;

And piety with wishes placed above,
And steady loyalty, and faithful love.
And thou, sweet Poetry, thou loveliest maid,
Still first to fly where sensual joys invade;
Unfit in these degenerate times of shame
To catch the heart, or strike for honest fame;
Dear charming nymph, neglected and decried,
My shame in crowds, my solitary pride;
Thou source of all my bliss, and all my woe,
That found'st me poor at first, and keep'st me so;
Thou guide by which the nobler arts excel,
Thou nurse of every virtue, fare thee well!
Farewell, and O! where'er thy voice be tried,
On Torno's cliffs,[1] or Pambamarca's side,[2]
Whether where equinoctial fervors glow,
Or winter wraps the polar world in snow,
Still let thy voice, prevailing over time,
Redress the rigors of the inclement clime;
Aid slighted truth with thy persuasive strain;
Teach erring man to spurn the rage of gain;
Teach him, that states of native strength possessed,
Though very poor, may still be very blest;
That trade's proud empire hastes to swift decay,
As ocean sweeps the labored mole[3] away;
While self-dependent power can time defy,
As rocks resist the billows and the sky.

1. **Torno's cliffs.** Perhaps the poet refers to some region near the river Torneo, or Tornea, which flows into the Gulf of Bothnia.

2. **Pambamarca's side.** Pambamarca is a mountain in Ecuador.

3. **Labored mole,** carefully constructed breakwater.

ROBERT BURNS

1759–1796

PROBABLY the poetry of "Robbie Burns, the Ayrshire Ploughman," is known to more English-speaking people than that of any other writer — not excepting even Shakespeare; for many a person who never reads a book is familiar with *John Anderson My Jo*, *Auld Lang Syne*, and *Bonie Doon*, though he may not know or care who wrote these famous songs.

The Scotch poet was born at Alloway in Ayrshire, where his father cultivated a small farm. He was the eldest of seven children. Before he was eight years old the family removed to Mt. Oliphant, and later to Lochlea. Here, in 1784, the father died, worn out with incessant toil, which ended only in disappointment. The family were so poor that Robert was obliged to work hard even when very young, and at fifteen he was his father's chief helper. In later years he described his life at Mt. Oliphant as combining "the cheerless gloom of a hermit with the unceasing moil of a galley slave." But poets are given to exaggeration, and doubtless the attractive picture of home life which he afterwards painted in the *Cotter's Saturday Night* is true in the main of the life in his father's cottage.

In his father, Burns was most fortunate, for he was a man of strict integrity and strong religious faith. The education of his children was, in his judgment, so important that when they were unable to attend school he taught them himself,

notwithstanding his exhausting labors on the farm. The family as a whole were fond of reading. Among their books the poet mentions certain plays of Shakespeare, Pope's works, — including his translation of Homer, — the *Spectator*, Allan Ramsay's writings, and several volumes on religious and philosophical subjects. Probably in this list the Bible should stand first. He himself studied the art of verse-making in a collection of songs. He says: "I pored over them, driving my cart or walking to labor, song by song, carefully noting the true tender or sublime from affectation or fustian. I am convinced that I owe to this practice much of my critic-craft, such as it is!" His first song, composed when he was fifteen, was inspired by a young girl who worked at his side in the harvest field.

Robert and his brother Gilbert had taken a farm at Mossgiel, not far away, while their father was still living, and after his death they removed there, taking with them the rest of the family. Unfortunately the farm did not prosper. On reaching the age of twenty-seven the poet determined to go to Jamaica where he had been promised a position as overseer of an estate. In order to raise money to pay his passage he published a volume of poems. The returns were small, but the fame of the writer spread so rapidly that he was persuaded to remain in his own country and publish a second edition of his poems in Edinburgh.

The two winters which he spent in the Scotch capital at this time form an interesting episode in his life. He was the lion of the day in literary circles. Many persons who met him have told how he impressed them; but the most interesting account is that of Walter Scott, then a youth of sixteen. He says of Burns: "His person was strong and robust; his manner rustic, not clownish; a sort of dignified plainness and simplicity. His countenance was more massive

than it looks in any of the portraits. . . . There was a strong expression of sense and shrewdness in all his lineaments; the eye alone, I think, indicated the poetical character and temperament. It was large, and of a dark cast, which glowed (I say literally glowed), when he spoke, with feeling or interest. I never saw such another eye in a human head, though I have seen the most distinguished men of my time."

In 1788 the poet married Jane Armour, and the following year settled with her on a farm at Ellisland, near Dumfries. Finding it impossible to make a living for his increasing family as a farmer, he obtained through friends the place of exciseman for the surrounding region. This position obliged him to ride more than two hundred miles a week, collecting government taxes. In 1791 he moved to the town of Dumfries. The following year he came near losing his place through an act of indiscretion which proved him to be more poet than exciseman. He bought four guns which had come into the possession of the government through the seizure of a smuggling vessel, and sent them with expressions of admiration and sympathy to the French Legislative Assembly. These were the early days of the Revolution when young men in many parts of the world were enthusiastic in their support of the movement. Fortunately the guns failed to reach their destination, and the poet having made his peace with the authorities kept his position until failing health obliged him to give it up. During his later years he wrote little but songs, and for these he would take no money, although he was, as ever, a poor man. He died in 1796, at the age of thirty-seven. In 1815 his remains were transferred to a mausoleum built as a tribute to his genius.

As a man, Burns was far from perfect. His passions were strong and he never learned to control them, and in

consequence he had reason to repent bitterly many a rash act. Yet he was brave and honest; he had a righteous hatred of hypocrisy; as the champion of the humble, he claimed for the poorest the full privileges of sturdy manhood; he cared heartily for his fellowmen and had a place in his affections even for the field-mouse and the daisy. Because his verse beats with the passions of his fiery and sympathetic nature, the world loves him as it loves few other poets. Among the best known of his productions are *The Cotter's Saturday Night*, *Tam o' Shanter*, *Address to the Unco Guid*, *To a Mouse*, and *To a Mountain Daisy*. In speaking of his songs, one might mention first, *Scots Wha Hae*, — composed in the midst of tempests, while the poet was riding over a wild Galloway moor, — and next, *Highland Mary* and *A Man's a Man for a' That;* but there is no need of enumerating the songs of Burns. As Emerson has said, "The wind whispers them, the birds whistle them, the corn, barley, and bulrushes hoarsely rustle them. . . . They are the property and the solace of mankind."

THE COTTER'S SATURDAY NIGHT*

My loved, my honored, much respected friend![1]
No mercenary bard his homage pays;
With honest pride I scorn each selfish end,
My dearest meed, a friend's esteem and praise:
To you I sing, in simple Scottish lays,
The lowly train in life's sequestered scene;
The native feelings strong, the guileless ways;
What Aikin in a cottage would have been;
Ah! tho' his worth unknown, far happier there, I ween![2]

November chill blaws loud wi' angry sugh;[3]
The short'ning winter-day is near a close;

* In printing this poem, it has seemed best to follow the text as given in the scholarly *Centenary Burns* (1896), edited by Messrs. Henley and Henderson.

NOTE. — *The Cotter's Saturday Night* was written in 1785 or the beginning of 1786. In all English poetry there are few pictures of home life so charming as that portrayed in this poem. The stanza employed is the Spenserian stanza, named for Edmund Spenser, who first used it. The first eight lines have five feet each, while the last has six feet.

Cotter, as used by Burns, means *peasant farmer*.

1. **Much respected friend,** Robert Aiken, an early friend of the poet's, to whom the poem was inscribed.

2. **Ween,** think, fancy.

3. **Sugh** (pronounced much like *sook*, with the *k* softened; *i.e.* like *such* in German), wail, sough.

The miry beasts retreating frae[1] the pleugh;[2]
The black'ning trains o' craws[3] to their repose:
The toil-worn Cotter frae his labor goes,
This night his weekly moil[4] is at an end,
Collects his spades, his mattocks,[5] and his hoes,
Hoping the morn[6] in ease and rest to spend,
And weary, o'er the moor, his course does hameward[7] bend.

At length his lonely cot appears in view,
Beneath the shelter of an agèd tree;
Th' expectant wee-things, toddlin, stacher[8] through
To meet their dad, wi' flichterin'[9] noise and glee.
His wee bit ingle,[10] blinkin bonilie,[11]
His clean hearth-stane,[12] his thrifty wifie's smile,
The lisping infant prattling on his knee,
Does a' his weary kiaugh and care beguile,[13]
And makes him quite forget his labor and his toil.

Belyve the elder bairns come drapping in,[14]
At service out, amang the farmers roun';

1. **Frae**, from.
2. **Pleugh** (the *gh* has a guttural sound), plough.
3. **Trains o' craws**, trains of crows.
4. **Moil**, toil.
5. **Mattocks**, implements for digging.
6. **The morn**, to-morrow.
7. **Hameward**, homeward.
8. **Stacher**, totter.
9. **Flichterin'**, fluttering.
10. **Ingle**, fireplace.
11. **Bonilie**, cheerfully, attractively.
12. **Hearth-stane**, hearth-stone.
13. **Does a' his weary kiaugh and care beguile**, Does all his weary cark (fret) and care beguile. *A'* has the sound of *a* in *all;* pronounce *kiaugh* something like *kee-owch'*, giving the *ch* a harsh, guttural sound. (In later editions, *carking cares* was substituted for *kiaugh and care.*)
14. **Belyve the elder bairns come drapping in**, Presently the older children come dropping in. (The vowel sound in *bairns* is like that in *care.*)

Some ca' [1] the pleugh, some herd, some tentie rin
  A cannie errand to a neebor town : [2]
Their eldest hope, their Jenny, woman grown,
  In youthfu' bloom, love sparkling in her e'e,[3]
Comes hame ; perhaps, to shew a braw [4] new gown,
  Or deposite her sair-won penny-fee,[5]
To help her parents dear, if they in hardship be.

With joy unfeigned brothers and sisters meet,
  And each for other's weelfare kindly spiers : [6]
The social hours, swift-winged, unnoticed fleet ;
  Each tells the uncos [7] that he sees or hears.
The parents, partial, eye their hopeful years ;
  Anticipation forward points the view ;
The mother wi' her needle and her sheers [8]
  Gars auld claes look amaist as weel 's the new ; [9]
The father mixes a' wi' admonition due.

Their master's and their mistress's command
  The younkers [10] a' are warnèd to obey ;
And mind their labors wi' an eydent [11] hand,
  And ne'er, though out o' sight, to jauk [12] or play .
"And O ! be sure to fear the Lord alway,

1. **Ca'**, follow.

2. **Some tentie rin a cannie errand to a neebor town**, some, heedful, run on a quiet errand to a neighboring town.

3. **E'e**, eye.

4. **Braw**, fine.

5. **Sair-won penny-fee**, hard-earned wages.

6. **Spiers**, asks.

7. **Uncos**, wonders, news.

8. **Sheers**, scissors.

9. **Gars auld claes look amaist as weel 's the new**, makes old clothes look almost as well as the new.

10. **Younkers**, young people.

11. **Eydent**, diligent.

12. **Jauk**, trifle.

And mind your duty, duly, morn and night;
Lest in temptation's path ye gang[1] astray,
Implore His counsel and assisting might:
They never sought in vain that sought the Lord aright!"

But hark! a rap comes gently to the door;
Jenny, wha kens[2] the meaning o' the same,
Tells how a neebor[3] lad came o'er the moor
To do some errands, and convoy her hame.
The wily mother sees the conscious flame
Sparkle in Jenny's e'e, and flush her cheek;
With heart-struck, anxious care, inquires his name,
While Jenny hafflins[4] is afraid to speak;
Weel pleased the mother hears, it 's nae[5] wild, worthless rake.

With kindly welcome Jenny brings him ben;[6]
A strappin' youth, he takes the mother's eye;
Blithe Jenny sees the visit 's no ill taen;[7]
The father cracks[8] of horses, pleughs, and kye.[9]
The youngster's artless heart o'erflows wi' joy,
But blate and laithfu',[10] scarce can weel behave;
The mother, wi' a woman's wiles,[11] can spy

1. **Gang**, go.
2. **Wha kens**, who knows.
3. **Neebor**, neighbor.
4. **Hafflins**, half.
5. **Nae**, no.
6. **Ben**, inside.
7. **No ill taen**, not ill taken; *i.e.* Jenny's parents are pleased to have the young man come in.
8. **Cracks**, chats.
9. **Kye**, cattle.
10. **Blate and laithfu'**, shy and sheepish.
11. **Wi' a woman's wiles**, with a woman's penetration.

What makes the youth sae[1] bashfu' and sae grave;
Weel-pleased to think her bairn 's respected like the lave.[2]

O happy love! where love like this is found:
O heart-felt raptures! bliss beyond compare!
I 've pacèd much this weary, mortal round,
And sage experience bids me this declare, —
"If Heaven a draught of heav'nly pleasure spare,
One cordial in this melancholy vale,
'T is when a youthful, loving, modest pair
In other's arms breathe out the tender tale
Beneath the milk-white thorn that scents the ev'ning gale."

Is there, in human form, that bears a heart,
A wretch! a villain! lost to love and truth!
That can with studied, sly, ensnaring art
Betray sweet Jenny's unsuspecting youth?
Curse on his perjured arts! dissembling, smooth!
Are honor, virtue, conscience, all exiled?
Is there no pity, no relenting ruth,[3]
Points to the parents fondling o'er their child?
Then paints the ruined maid, and their distraction wild!

But now the supper crowns their simple board,
The healsome parritch, chief o' Scotia's food;[4]
The soupe[5] their only hawkie[6] does afford,

1. **Sae**, so. 2. **The lave**, the rest. 3. **Ruth**, pity, tenderness. 4. **Healsome parritch, chief o' Scotia's food**, wholesome porridge, chief of Scotland's food. 5. **Soupe**, milk. 6. **Hawkie**, cow.

That 'yont the hallan snugly chows her cood;[1]
The dame brings forth in complimental mood,
To grace the lad, her weel-hained kebbuck, fell;[2]
And aft he's pressed, and aft he ca's it guid;[3]
The frugal wifie, garrulous, will tell,
How 't was a towmond auld, sin' lint was i' the bell.[4]

The cheerfu' supper done, wi' serious face
They round the ingle form a circle wide;
The sire turns o'er wi' patriarchal grace
The big ha'-Bible,[5] ance[6] his father's pride.
His bonnet[7] rev'rently is laid aside,
His lyart haffets[8] wearing thin and bare;
Those strains that once did sweet in Zion glide,[9]

1. **That 'yont the hallan snugly chows her cood,** that beyond the wall snugly chews her cud. In a cottage of this kind the cow lives under the same roof with the family.

2. **Her weel-hained kebbuck, fell,** her well-saved cheese, pungent; *i.e.* her carefully saved, or kept, strong cheese.

3. **And aft he 's pressed, and aft he ca's** (pronounced like *cause*) **it guid,** And oft he 's urged, and oft he calls it good.

4. **'T was a towmond auld, sin' lint was i' the bell,** it was a twelvemonth old since flax was in flower; *i.e.* when the flax was last in bloom it was a year old.

5. **The big ha'-Bible** (pronounced *haw*), the big hall-Bible. The name originated in the fact that large Bibles were first used in the hall, or principal room, of the noble's castle, where all the household assembled for worship.

6. **Ance,** once.

7. **Bonnet,** a soft cap made of seamless woolen stuff.

8. **Lyart haffets,** gray side-locks.

9. **Those strains that once, etc.,** *i.e.* the *Psalms*, which were sung in Jerusalem. *Zion* is really the hill on which the old city of Jerusalem was built.

He wales[1] a portion with judicious care;
And, "Let us worship God!" he says, with solemn air.

They chant their artless notes in simple guise;
They tune their hearts, by far the noblest aim:
Perhaps *Dundee's*[2] wild warbling measures rise,
Or plaintive *Martyrs*,[2] worthy of the name;
Or noble *Elgin*[2] beets[3] the heavenward flame,
The sweetest far of Scotia's holy lays.
Compared with these, Italian trills are tame;
The tickled ears no heart-felt raptures raise;
Nae unison hae they with our Creator's praise.[4]

The priest-like father reads the sacred page,
How Abram was the friend of God on high;[5]
Or, Moses bade eternal warfare wage
With Amalek's ungracious progeny;[6]
Or, how the royal Bard[7] did groaning lie
Beneath the stroke of Heaven's avenging ire;
Or Job's pathetic plaint,[8] and wailing cry;
Or rapt Isaiah's wild, seraphic fire;
Or other holy Seers that tune the sacred lyre.

1. **Wales**, selects.

2. **Dundee, Martyrs, Elgin**, well-known psalm tunes.

3. **Beets**, fans or feeds.

4. **Nae unison hae they**, no unison have they; *i.e.* they are not in harmony with.

5. **Abram, or Abraham.** See *Genesis*.

6. **Moses bade, etc.** See *Exodus* xvii.

7. **The royal Bard**, King David. Probably Burns refers to certain of the *Psalms* which express suffering and repentance.

8. **Job's pathetic plaint.** The "plaint" begins with *Job* iii.

Perhaps the Christian volume[1] is the theme:
How guiltless blood for guilty man was shed;
How He, who bore in heaven the second name,
Had not on earth whereon to lay His head;
How His first followers and servants sped;[2]
The precepts sage they wrote to many a land:[3]
How he, who lone in Patmos banishèd,
Saw in the sun a mighty angel stand,
And heard great Bab'lon's doom pronounced by Heaven's command.[4]

Then kneeling down to Heaven's Eternal King,
The saint, the father, and the husband prays:
Hope "springs exulting on triumphant wing,"[5]
That thus they all shall meet in future days,
There ever bask in uncreated rays,
No more to sigh, or shed the bitter tear,
Together hymning their Creator's praise,
In such society, yet still more dear;
While circling Time moves round in an eternal sphere.

Compared with this, how poor Religion's pride,
In all the pomp of method, and of art;

1. **The Christian volume,** *i.e.* the New Testament.

2. **How His first followers, etc.** See *Acts of the Apostles.*

3. **The precepts sage.** See the *Epistles.*

4. **He, who lone in Patmos, etc.** St. John the Evangelist is said to have been exiled to the island of Patmos, or Patmo, west of Asia Minor, and there to have written the *Apocalypse*, or *Book of Revelation.* The doom of Babylon is pronounced in Chapter xviii of that book.

5. **Hope springs exulting, etc.** See Pope's *Essay on Man*, Epistle I, l. 95, and his *Windsor Forest*, l. 112.

When men display to congregations wide
Devotion's ev'ry grace, except the heart,
The Power,[1] incensed, the pageant will desert,
The pompous strain, the sacerdotal stole;
But haply,[2] in some cottage far apart,
May hear, well pleased, the language of the soul,
And in His Book of Life the inmates poor enroll.

Then homeward all take off their sev'ral way;
The youngling cottagers retire to rest:
The parent-pair their secret homage pay,
And proffer up to Heaven the warm request,
That He who stills the raven's clam'rous nest,
And decks the lily fair in flow'ry pride,
Would, in the way His wisdom sees the best,
For them and for their little ones provide;
But, chiefly, in their hearts with Grace Divine preside.

From scenes like these old Scotia's grandeur springs,
That makes her loved at home, revered abroad:
Princes and lords are but the breath of kings,[3]
"An honest man 's the noblest work of God:"[4]
And certes,[5] in fair Virtue's heavenly road,
The cottage leaves the palace far behind;
What is a lordling's pomp? a cumbrous load,
Disguising oft the wretch of human kind,
Studied in arts of hell, in wickedness refined!

1. **The Power,** the Almighty. 2. **Haply,** perhaps, perchance.
3. **Princes and lords,** etc. See *The Deserted Village*, lines 53 and 54.
4. **An honest man 's,** etc. Pope's *Essay on Man*, Epistle IV, l. 247.
5. **Certes,** truly.

O Scotia! my dear, my native soil!
For whom my warmest wish to Heaven is sent!
Long may thy hardy sons of rustic toil
Be blest with health, and peace, and sweet content!
And, O! may Heaven their simple lives prevent
From luxury's contagion, weak and vile!
Then, howe'er crowns and coronets be rent,
A virtuous populace may rise the while,
And stand a wall of fire around their much-loved Isle.

O Thou! who poured the patriotic tide
That streamed thro' Wallace's undaunted heart,[1]
Who dared to nobly stem tyrannic pride,
Or nobly die, the second glorious part,
(The patriot's God peculiarly Thou art,
His friend, inspirer, guardian, and reward!)
O never, never, Scotia's realm desert,
But still the patriot and the patriot-bard
In bright succession raise, her ornament and guard!

1. **Wallace's undaunted heart.** Sir William Wallace, born about 1274, is one of the most famous of Scotch heroes. For a time he was a successful opponent of Edward I of England, but he finally suffered defeat, and in 1305 was captured and taken to London, where he was tried, condemned, and beheaded. One of Burns's most celebrated songs begins: "Scots, wha hae (who have) wi' Wallace bled." Scott tells of Wallace in his *Tales of a Grandfather*.

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

1772–1834

Coleridge was born in Ottery St. Mary, in Devonshire, England, and spent his early years in the midst of a large family. His father, who was vicar of the town and master of the grammar school, died when the son was only nine years old. His character must, however, have impressed Coleridge deeply, for he said, in after years: "The memory of my father — my reverend, kind, learned, simple-hearted father — is a religion to me." Soon after his father's death he left his happy home in the country to enter a school in London, known as Christ's Hospital. Charles Lamb, who was a schoolmate of his, has sketched the life there in two well-known essays. In one of them, *Christ's Hospital Fifty Years Ago*, he describes the summer holidays, so delightful for himself with his family near, and so dreary for the country boy with no friends in the city; and he pictures Coleridge as forlorn and half-starved, declaring that in those days the food of the "Blue-coat boys" was cruelly insufficient. From early childhood the future poet had been passionately fond of reading, and an occurrence which took place during his early years in London enabled him for a time to gratify his taste. One day while walking down the Strand, he put out his arms as if in the act of swimming, and in so doing touched a passer-by. The man, taking him for a thief, seized him, crying, "What, so young and so wicked!" "I am not a pickpocket," replied the boy; "I

only thought I was Leander swimming the Hellespont!" After making some inquiries, his chance acquaintance subscribed to a library for him, and the story runs that in a short time the young bookworm had read "right through the catalogue."

In 1791 Coleridge entered Cambridge University. While there he was deeply stirred by events in France — for the Revolution was in progress — and ran some risk of being expelled by the open expression of his radical views on politics. His fine ode, *France*, written several years later, was the expression of this intense interest. During his second year of study, while suffering from a fit of despondency, he suddenly left the university — just why, no one knows — and went to London. There he enlisted in the 15th dragoons under the name of Silas Tompkyn Comberback. While he was in the service his awkwardness in doing manual labor, especially in grooming his horse, led to his exchanging tasks with his comrades: they performed his mechanical duties, while he wrote letters for them to their wives or sweethearts. A Latin inscription which he placed above his saddle in the stable led to the discovery of his true condition, and about the same time his friends learned of his whereabouts. At the end of four months in the dragoons he was bought out and enabled to return to his studies. He remained in Cambridge but a short time, however, leaving in 1794 without taking a degree.

The following year he married Miss Sara Fricker. This important step was taken on the strength of a small sum promised by a bookseller for a volume of poems which he was then writing. A month later his friend Robert Southey — afterwards well known as an author — married his wife's sister. Some time before this, the two young men had conceived the idea of crossing the sea with a few congenial

acquaintances and forming an ideal community on the banks of the Susquehanna. Fortunately the scheme was abandoned and the two dreamers turned their attention to literary projects.

Coleridge's best work as a poet was done in 1797 and 1798, and probably the inspiration came largely from his friendship with William Wordsworth. During these two years the poets lived near each other in the beautiful Cumberland country, and while taking long rambles over the Quantock Hills they talked, planned, and wrote. The first result of this intercourse was a joint volume of poems called *Lyrical Ballads*, published in 1798. This included Coleridge's *Ancient Mariner* and Wordsworth's *We are Seven*. About the same time Coleridge wrote the first part of *Christabel*, the ode *France*, *Kubla Khan*, and a few other well-known poems. The impression which he made at this period of his life upon Dorothy Wordsworth, the poet's sister, was recorded by her in a letter. She says of him: "He is a wonderful man. His conversation teems with soul and mind. . . . His eye is large and full, and not very dark but gray, such an eye as would receive from a heavy soul the dullest expression; but it speaks every emotion of his animated mind; it has more of the poet's eye in a fine frenzy rolling than I ever witnessed. He has fine dark eyebrows and an overhanging forehead."

Of Coleridge as poet there is unfortunately little more to relate, for during the remainder of his life he devoted himself mainly to philosophy and literary criticism, with occasional work in journalism. After a stay in Germany he brought back to England a knowledge of German metaphysics and an enthusiasm for German literature which enabled him to do much towards awakening in his own countrymen an interest in these subjects. He had never been strong,

and from the age of thirty-four he suffered seriously from ill-health and from his practice of using opium — a habit begun by his taking the dangerous drug to relieve acute pain. No doubt his powers were impaired by these causes. In 1804, hoping to benefit by change of climate, he went to Malta, and before his return spent some months in Italy. With the exception of a short tour on the Rhine with the Wordsworths, the last sixteen years of his life were passed quietly at Highgate, a village near London, where through the kind care of friends he was enabled to control the opium habit and do a fair amount of intellectual work. His mind dwelt much on religious subjects, and the faith which had earlier found expression in his noble *Hymn in the Vale of Chamouni* brought light and consolation as the end drew near. Many young men came to see him during these last years, drawn by his fame as a poet and still more by his remarkable powers as a talker. One of them has said of him in this connection : "Throughout a long summer's day would this man talk to you in low, equable, but clear and musical tones, concerning things human and divine." And the same person has described a day spent with him as "a Sabbath past expression, deep, tranquil, and serene." The poet died at Highgate in 1834, at the age of sixty-two.

Coleridge was a many-sided genius, and perhaps the world has benefited as largely by his powers as a thinker as by his gift for poetry. He did much both by talking and writing to broaden English thought, and his keen and suggestive criticism of other authors, of Shakespeare especially, has been of high value to lovers of literature. As a poet he is distinguished for the rare quality of his imagination and the wonderful music of his verse.

ARGUMENT OF THE ANCIENT MARINER

THE argument, or plot, of the poem is as follows: *

Three guests were on their way to a wedding, when one of them — the bridegroom's nearest relative — was stopped by a Mariner with long gray beard and glittering eye, who constrained him to listen to his story. The Mariner once set sail in a ship bound southward. After crossing the equator the vessel was driven by strong winds toward the south pole, and was finally hemmed in by icebergs. An albatross which appeared at this time brought good luck: the ice split and the ship sailed northward. The Mariner, for no apparent reason, shot the bird of good omen. At first his comrades declared that he had done a hellish deed, but when the fog cleared away they justified him, believing that the fog had been brought by the bird. In this way they became accomplices in his crime. By killing the albatross the Mariner had offended the Spirit of the South Pole, who now followed the ship "nine fathom deep" to make sure that vengeance was meted out to the guilty man. As a sign of the Mariner's guilt the sailors fastened about his neck the dead bird. The vessel was now in the Pacific Ocean. On nearing the equator she was becalmed, and before long all the sailors were dying of thirst. Suddenly a skeleton ship appeared in sight, having on board Death and Life-in-Death. The two spectres were throwing dice to see which should possess the doomed Mariner. Life-in-Death won, and the Mariner was hers. If Death had won, his life would soon have

* When *The Ancient Mariner* was reprinted in 1800, the poet added explanatory notes in the margin. These have been found useful in writing this argument. The poet's notes are given in his *Poetical Works*, edited by James Dykes Campbell (1893).

ended; as it was, existence for him was to mean — for a time at least — life in the midst of the dead. No sooner had the spectre bark shot by than his comrades, four times fifty living men, dropped lifeless one by one. For seven days and seven nights he suffered agonies from the curse in their stony eyes; but he could not die, and he could not pray.

One day, while watching some water snakes at play, he was charmed with their beauty and blessed them unawares — a sure sign that love for God's lower creatures was springing up in his heart. The next instant the spell began to break: the albatross fell from his neck into the sea and he could move his lips in prayer. He slept, and the Holy Mother sent rain; and when he awoke the wind was blowing. A troop of angelic spirits now entered the bodies of the dead sailors and worked the ropes, and, obedient to the angels, the Spirit of the South Pole helped the ship onward. As she sped on, the Mariner, who lay in a swoon, learned from the talk of two spirits that his penance was not yet accomplished. Soon after waking he beheld the shores of his native country. As the vessel neared the land the angels left the bodies of the sailors, and at the same time a small boat approached bringing a pilot and his boy, and a pious hermit — all known to the Mariner. Suddenly there was a dreadful sound, and the ship sank. On coming to his senses the Mariner found himself in the pilot's boat. When the hermit asked him, "What manner of man art thou?" his agony was fearful until he had found relief in telling his experience. As a punishment for his crime in shooting the albatross the agony was to return at intervals and compel him to travel from land to land relating his strange tale. After admonishing the wedding guest to love well both man and beast, the ancient Mariner departed. The poet says of his listener,

"A sadder and a wiser man
He rose the morrow morn."

THE ANCIENT MARINER

PART I

It is an ancient Mariner,
And he stoppeth one of three.
"By thy long grey beard and glittering eye,
Now wherefore stopp'st thou me?

NOTE. — *The Ancient Mariner* was written in 1797. The plot was suggested by a dream related to Coleridge by one of his friends. While the story is his own invention, he took several points from Shelvocke's *Voyages* and accepted a few hints from Wordsworth, who furnished also two or three lines of verse. In the beginning the two poets intended to work together, but this plan was found impracticable, and Coleridge proceeded by himself. It is easy to believe that the plot originated in a dream, for the completed poem is one of the strangest, most fantastic dreams that ever formed themselves in a poet's brain. So far as its moral import is concerned, the production will hardly bear close scrutiny, although it teaches the duty of loving all God's creatures, both great and small. The prolonged suffering of the Mariner is a punishment far too severe for his thoughtless act, while his four times fifty comrades, who endure horrible tortures before dying, have been guilty of no crime whatsoever. Still it is not necessary that every piece of literature should teach a consistent moral lesson, and *The Ancient Mariner* can be enjoyed for its marvelous pictures and its weird melody.

The form chosen by Coleridge for his production, that of the mediæval ballad, is peculiarly adapted to story-telling on account of the freedom which it allows, and it has never been more artistically used than in this instance. In harmony with the ballad form the poet uses certain old words, such as "trow," "wist," and "countree." It will be seen that the stanzas vary in length, and that there are occasional

"The Bridegroom's doors are opened wide,
And I am next of kin;[1]
The guests are met, the feast is set:
Mayst hear the merry din."

He holds him with his skinny hand,
"There was a ship," quoth[2] he.
"Hold off! unhand me, grey-beard loon!"[3]
Eftsoons[4] his hand dropped he.

He holds him with his glittering eye—
The Wedding-Guest stood still,
And listens like a three years' child:[5]
The Mariner hath his will.

The Wedding-Guest sat on a stone:
He cannot choose but hear;
And thus spake on that ancient man,
The bright-eyed Mariner.

"The ship was cheered, the harbor cleared,
Merrily did we drop

irregularities in metre. In general the first and third lines of a stanza have four feet each, while the second and fourth lines have three feet. Only the second and fourth lines rhyme, unless the stanza consists of more than four lines.

1. **Next of kin,** nearest relative.
2. **Quoth,** said.
3. **Loon,** worthless fellow.
4. **Eftsoons,** at once, immediately; a favorite word with the poet Spenser.
5. **And listens, etc.** Wordsworth wrote this line and the line following.

Below the kirk,[1] below the hill,
Below the lighthouse top.

"The Sun came up upon the left,[2]
Out of the sea came he!
And he shone bright, and on the right
Went down into the sea.

"Higher and higher every day,
Till over the mast at noon——"
The Wedding-Guest here beat his breast,
For he heard the loud bassoon.

The bride hath paced into the hall,
Red as a rose is she;
Nodding their heads before her goes
The merry minstrelsy.

The Wedding-Guest he beat his breast,
Yet he cannot choose but hear;
And thus spake on that ancient man,
The bright-eyed Mariner.

"And now the Storm-blast came, and he
Was tyrannous and strong:
He struck with his o'ertaking wings,
And chased us south along.

1. **Kirk,** church.

2. **The Sun came up upon the left.** This would be the case if a vessel were going from England, for instance, toward the equator; and each day the sun would be more nearly overhead.

"With sloping masts and dipping prow,
As who pursued with yell and blow
Still treads the shadow of his foe,
And forward bends his head,
The ship drove fast, loud roared the blast,
And southward aye we fled.

"And now there came both mist and snow,[1]
And it grew wondrous cold:
And ice, mast-high, came floating by,
As green as emerald.

"And through the drifts the snowy clifts[2]
Did send a dismal sheen:
Nor shapes of men nor beasts we ken[3]—
The ice was all between.

"The ice was here, the ice was there,
The ice was all around:
It cracked and growled, and roared and howled,
Like noises in a swound![4]

"At length did cross an Albatross,[5]
Thorough[6] the fog it came;

1. **And now there came both mist and snow.** They were nearing the south pole.
2. **Clifts,** clefts, cracks.
3. **Ken,** discern.
4. **Swound,** swoon, fainting fit.
5. **Albatross.** The albatross, the largest of sea birds, is found chiefly in the southern hemisphere, and because of its strength in flight is often seen far from land.
6. **Thorough,** through.

As if it had been a Christian soul,
We hailed it in God's name.

"It ate the food it ne'er had eat,
And round and round it flew.
The ice did split with a thunder-fit;
The helmsman steered us through.

"And a good south wind sprung up behind;
The Albatross did follow,
And every day, for food or play,
Came to the mariner's hollo!

"In mist or cloud, on mast or shroud,[1]
It perched for vespers nine;[2]
Whiles[3] all the night, through fog-smoke white,
Glimmered the white moon-shine."

"God save thee, ancient Mariner!
From the fiends that plague thee thus!—
Why look'st thou so?"—"With my cross-bow
I shot the Albatross."

1. **Shroud.** The shrouds are sets of ropes which serve as stays for the masts of a vessel.

2. **Vespers nine,** *i.e.* nine evenings. *Vesper* and *Hesperus* are names given to the evening star, especially to the planet Venus when it appears in the west soon after sunset. Consult the dictionary for other meanings of the word *vesper*.

3. **Whiles,** meanwhile.

PART II

"The Sun now rose upon the right:[1]
Out of the sea came he,
Still hid in mist, and on the left
Went down into the sea.

"And the good south wind still blew behind,
But no sweet bird did follow,
Nor any day for food or play
Come to the mariners' hollo!

"And I had done a hellish thing,
And it would work 'em woe:
For all averred, I had killed the bird
That made the breeze to blow.
'Ah wretch!' said they, 'the bird to slay,
That made the breeze to blow!'

"Nor dim nor red, like God's own head
The glorious sun uprist:[2]
Then all averred, I had killed the bird
That brought the fog and mist.
''T was right,' said they, 'such birds to slay,
That bring the fog and mist.'

1. **The Sun now rose upon the right.** This indicates that the vessel had turned about and was going northward. The poet says in his notes that she soon entered the Pacific Ocean.

2. **Nor dim nor red, etc.** The sun now rose clear and bright, and not dim or red, as when seen through mist or fog; and the sailors justified the Mariner, thinking that by his act the fog had been dispersed. **Uprist** means *uprose.*

"The fair breeze blew, the white foam flew,
The furrow followed free;[1]
We were the first that ever burst
Into that silent sea.[2]

"Down dropped the breeze, the sails dropped down,
'T was sad as sad could be;
And we did speak only to break
The silence of the sea!

"All in a hot and copper sky,
The bloody Sun, at noon,
Right up above the mast did stand,
No bigger than the Moon.

"Day after day, day after day,
We stuck, nor breath nor motion;
As idle as a painted ship
Upon a painted ocean.

"Water, water, everywhere,
And all the boards did shrink;
Water, water, everywhere,
Nor any drop to drink.

"The very deep did rot: O Christ!
That ever this should be!

1. **The furrow followed free,** *i.e.* the track, or wake, left by the ship appeared to be gladly following her.

2. **That silent sea.** The vessel had reached the equator.

Yea, slimy things did crawl with legs
Upon the slimy sea.

"About, about, in reel and rout
The death-fires [1] danced at night;
The water, like a witch's oils,
Burnt green, and blue, and white.

"And some in dreams assurèd were
Of the spirit that plagued us so;[2]
Nine fathom deep he had followed us
From the land of mist and snow.

"And every tongue, through utter drought,
Was withered at the root;
We could not speak, no more than if
We had been choked with soot.

"Ah! well-a-day! what evil looks
Had I from old and young!
Instead of the cross, the Albatross
About my neck was hung."

1. **Death-fires.** There is a superstition that death is sometimes foreshadowed by death-fires or fetch-lights. In this instance the fires presaged the death of the sailors.

2. **The spirit that plagued us so.** This was "the lonesome spirit from the south pole," who was seeking revenge for the death of the albatross.

PART III

"THERE passed a weary time. Each throat
Was parched, and glazed each eye.
A weary time! a weary time!
How glazed each weary eye,
When, looking westward, I beheld
A something in the sky.

"At first it seemed a little speck,
And then it seemed a mist;
It moved and moved, and took at last
A certain shape, I wist.[1]

"A speck, a mist, a shape, I wist!
And still it neared and neared:
As if it dodged a water-sprite,
It plunged and tacked and veered.

"With throats unslaked, with black lips baked,
We could nor laugh nor wail;
Through utter drought all dumb we stood!
I bit my arm, I sucked the blood,
And cried, 'A sail! a sail!'

"With throats unslaked, with black lips baked,
Agape[2] they heard me call:
Gramercy![3] they for joy did grin,

1. **I wist,** I knew.
2. **Agape,** with mouths open as though surprised.
3. **Gramercy** (from the French *grand-merci*), an exclamation formerly used to denote thankfulness with surprise.

And all at once their breath drew in,
As they were drinking all.

"See! see! (I cried) she tacks no more!
Hither to work us weal,[1]
Without a breeze, without a tide,
She steadies with upright keel!

"The western wave was all a-flame,
The day was well-nigh done!
Almost upon the western wave
Rested the broad bright Sun;
When that strange shape drove suddenly
Betwixt us and the Sun.

"And straight[2] the Sun was flecked with bars,[3]
(Heaven's Mother[4] send us grace!)
As if through a dungeon grate he peered
With broad and burning face.

"Alas! (thought I, and my heart beat loud)
How fast she nears and nears!
Are those her sails that glance in the Sun,
Like restless gossameres?[5]

"Are those her ribs through which the Sun
Did peer, as through a grate?

1. **To work us weal,** to do us good.
2. **Straight,** straightway, immediately.
3. **The Sun was flecked with bars.** The frame of the skeleton ship showed clearly against the setting sun as she passed before it.
4. **Heaven's Mother,** the Virgin Mary.
5. **Gossameres,** gossamers, cobwebs.

And is that Woman all her crew?
Is that a Death? and are there two?
Is Death that woman's mate?

"Her lips were red, her looks were free,
Her locks were yellow as gold:
Her skin was as white as leprosy,
The Nightmare Life-in-Death[1] was she
Who thicks man's blood with cold.

"The naked hulk alongside came,
And the twain were casting dice;
'The game is done! I've won, I've won!'
Quoth she, and whistles thrice.

"The Sun's rim dips; the stars rush out;
At one stride comes the dark;[2]
With far-heard whisper o'er the sea
Off shot the spectre-bark.

"We listened and looked sideways up!
Fear at my heart, as at a cup,
My life-blood seemed to sip!
The stars were dim, and thick the night,
The steersman's face by his lamp gleamed white;
From the sails the dew did drip—

1. **The Nightmare Life-in-Death.** In this strange being the poet personifies the state of a person who lives, as it were, in the shadow of death. The condition called "nightmare" was formerly believed to be caused by the witch Nightmare, who oppressed people during sleep.

2. **At one stride comes the dark.** This is a wonderful picture of the sudden fall of night near the equator, where there is no twilight.

Till clomb[1] above the eastern bar
The hornèd Moon, with one bright star
Within the nether tip.[2]

"One after one, by the star-dogged Moon,
Too quick for groan or sigh,
Each turned his face with a ghastly pang,
And cursed me with his eye.

"Four times fifty living men,
(And I heard nor sigh nor groan)
With heavy thump, a lifeless lump,
They dropped down one by one.

"The souls did from their bodies fly, —
They fled to bliss or woe!
And every soul, it passed me by,
Like the whizz of my cross-bow!"

PART IV

"I FEAR thee,[3] ancient Mariner!
I fear thy skinny hand!
And thou art long, and lank, and brown,[4]
As is the ribbed sea-sand.

1. **Clomb**, climbed; an old form.

2. **The hornèd moon, etc.** Coleridge says in a note: "It is a common superstition among sailors that something evil is about to happen whenever a star dogs the moon."

3. **I fear thee.** The wedding guest imagined that the Mariner died with the rest of the sailors and that he was talking with a ghost.

4. **And thou art long, etc.** This line and the line following were written by Wordsworth.

"I fear thee and thy glittering eye,
And thy skinny hand, so brown."—
"Fear not, fear not, thou Wedding-Guest!
This body dropped not down.

"Alone, alone, all, all alone,
Alone on a wide, wide sea!
And never a saint took pity on
My soul in agony.

"The many men, so beautiful!
And they all dead did lie:
And a thousand thousand slimy things
Lived on; and so did I.

"I looked upon the rotting sea,
And drew my eyes away;
I looked upon the rotting deck,
And there the dead men lay.

"I looked to heaven and tried to pray;
But or ever a prayer had gusht,
A wicked whisper came, and made
My heart as dry as dust.

"I closed my lids, and kept them close,
And the balls like pulses beat;
For the sky and the sea, and the sea and the sky,[1]
Lay like a load on my weary eye,
And the dead were at my feet.

1. **For the sky, etc.** This line, with its repetitions, and the extra length of the stanza, tend to make one feel the load that was pressing upon the Mariner.

"The cold sweat melted from their limbs,
Nor rot nor reek did they:
The look with which they looked on me
Had never passed away.

"An orphan's curse would drag to hell
A spirit from on high;
But oh! more horrible than that
Is a curse in a dead man's eye!
Seven days, seven nights, I saw that curse,
And yet I could not die.

"The moving Moon went up the sky,
And nowhere did abide:
Softly she was going up,
And a star or two beside—

"Her beams bemocked the sultry main,[1]
Like April hoar-frost spread;
But where the ship's huge shadow lay,
The charmèd water burnt alway
A still and awful red.

"Beyond the shadow of the ship,
I watched the water-snakes:
They moved in tracks of shining white,
And when they reared, the elfish light
Fell off in hoary flakes.[2]

1. **Bemocked the sultry main,** mocked the sultry ocean.

2. **They moved, etc.** This description is true of fish of all kinds on a dark night when there is a great deal of phosphorus in the water.

"Within the shadow of the ship
I watched their rich attire:
Blue, glossy green, and velvet black,
They coiled and swam; and every track
Was a flash of golden fire.

"O happy living things! no tongue
Their beauty might declare:
A spring of love gushed from my heart,
And I blessed them unaware:
Sure my kind saint took pity on me,
And I blessed them unaware.

"The selfsame moment I could pray;
And from my neck so free
The Albatross fell off, and sank
Like lead into the sea."

PART V

"O Sleep! it is a gentle thing,
Beloved from pole to pole!
To Mary Queen the praise be given!
She sent the gentle sleep from heaven,
That slid into my soul.

"The silly[1] buckets on the deck,
That had so long remained,
I dreamt that they were filled with dew;
And when I awoke, it rained.

1. **Silly, frail.**

"My lips were wet, my throat was cold,
My garments all were dank;[1]
Sure I had drunken in my dreams,
And still my body drank.

"I moved, and could not feel my limbs:
I was so light — almost
I thought that I had died in sleep,
And was a blessed ghost.

"And soon I heard a roaring wind:
It did not come anear;
But with its sound it shook the sails,
That were so thin and sere.

"The upper air burst into life!
And a hundred fire-flags sheen,[2]
To and fro they were hurried about!
And to and fro, and in and out,
The wan[3] stars danced between.

"And the coming wind did roar more loud,
And the sails did sigh like sedge;
And the rain poured down from one black cloud,
The Moon was at its edge.

"The thick black cloud was cleft, and still
The Moon was at its side:
Like waters shot from some high crag,
The lightning fell with never a jag,
A river steep and wide.

1. **Dank,** damp, wet; seldom used in prose.
2. **Sheen,** bright, glittering. 3. **Wan,** pale.

"The loud wind never reached the ship,
Yet now the ship moved on!
Beneath the lightning and the Moon
The dead men gave a groan.

"They groaned, they stirred, they all uprose,
Nor spake, nor moved their eyes;
It had been strange, even in a dream,
To have seen those dead men rise.

"The helmsman steered, the ship moved on;
Yet never a breeze up blew;
The mariners all gan work[1] the ropes,
Where they were wont to do;
They raised their limbs like lifeless tools —
We were a ghastly crew.

"The body of my brother's son
Stood by me, knee to knee:
The body and I pulled at one rope,
But he said nought to me."

"I fear thee, ancient Mariner!"
"Be calm, thou Wedding-Guest!
'T was not those souls that fled in pain,
Which to their corses came again,
But a troop of spirits blest:

"For when it dawned — they dropped their arms,
And clustered round the mast;

1. **Gan work**, did work, or began to work.

Sweet sounds rose slowly through their mouths,
And from their bodies passed.

"Around, around, flew each sweet sound,
Then darted to the Sun;
Slowly the sounds came back again,
Now mixed, now one by one.

"Sometimes a-dropping from the sky [1]
I heard the sky-lark sing;
Sometimes all little birds that are,
How they seemed to fill the sea and air
With their sweet jargoning! [2]

"And now 't was like all instruments,
Now like a lonely flute;
And now it is an angel's song,
That makes the heavens be mute.

"It ceased; yet still the sails made on
A pleasant noise till noon,
A noise like of a hidden brook
In the leafy month of June,
That to the sleeping woods all night
Singeth a quiet tune.

"Till noon we quietly sailed on,
Yet never a breeze did breathe:
Slowly and smoothly went the ship,
Moved onward from beneath.

1. **Sometimes a-dropping, etc.** Notice what a pleasant interlude is made by this stanza and the three which follow.

2. **Jargoning,** confused sounds.

"Under the keel nine fathom deep,
From the land of mist and snow,
The spirit slid: and it was he
That made the ship to go.
The sails at noon left off their tune,
And the ship stood still also.

"The Sun, right up above the mast,
Had fixed her to the ocean:
But in a minute she gan stir,
With a short uneasy motion —
Backwards and forwards half her length,
With a short uneasy motion.

"Then, like a pawing horse let go,
She made a sudden bound:
It flung the blood into my head,
And I fell down in a swound.[1]

"How long in that same fit I lay,
I have not to declare;
But ere my living life returned,
I heard, and in my soul discerned
Two voices in the air.[2]

1. **I fell down in a swound.** The poet explains that the vessel, driven by angelic power, sped on with extreme rapidity, and that the Mariner was put into a trance because he could not have endured the motion.

2. **Two voices in the air.** These were the voices of spirits who felt the wrong that had been done to the Spirit of the South Pole by the killing of the albatross.

" 'Is it he?' quoth one, 'Is this the man?
By Him who died on cross,
With his cruel bow he laid full low
The harmless Albatross.

" 'The spirit who bideth by himself
In the land of mist and snow,
He loved the bird that loved the man
Who shot him with his bow.'

" The other was a softer voice,
As soft as honey-dew;[1]
Quoth he, 'The man hath penance done,
And penance more will do.' "

PART VI

First Voice

" 'But tell me, tell me! speak again,
Thy soft response renewing —
What makes that ship drive on so fast?
What is the ocean doing?'

Second Voice

" 'Still as a slave before his lord,
The ocean hath no blast;
His great bright eye most silently
Up to the Moon is cast —

1. **Honey-dew**, a sweet substance found in small drops on the leaves of trees and plants.

"'If he may know[1] which way to go;
For she guides him smooth or grim.[2]
See, brother, see! how graciously
She looketh down on him.'

First Voice

"'But why drives on that ship so fast,
Without or wave or wind?'

Second Voice

"'The air is cut away before,
And closes from behind.

"'Fly, brother, fly! more high, more high!
Or we shall be belated:
For slow and slow that ship will go,
When the Mariner's trance is abated.'

"I woke, and we were sailing on
As in a gentle weather:
'T was night, calm night, the moon was high;
The dead men stood together.

"All stood together on the deck,
For a charnel-dungeon[3] fitter:
All fixed on me their stony eyes,
That in the Moon did glitter.

1. **If he may know**, so that he may know.

2. **For she guides him, etc.**, *i.e.* whether smooth or rough, the ocean is always guided by the moon.

3. **Charnel-dungeon**, a vault where the bones of the dead are kept.

"The pang, the curse, with which they died,
Had never passed away:
I could not draw my eyes from theirs,
Nor turn them up to pray.

"And now this spell was snapped: once more
I viewed the ocean green,
And looked far forth, yet little saw
Of what had else been seen —

"Like one that on a lonesome road
Doth walk in fear and dread,
And having once turned round walks on,
And turns no more his head;
Because he knows, a frightful fiend
Doth close behind him tread.

"But soon there breathed a wind on me,
Nor sound nor motion made:
Its path was not upon the sea,
In ripple or in shade.

"It raised my hair, it fanned my cheek,
Like a meadow-gale of spring —
It mingled strangely with my fears,
Yet it felt like a welcoming.

"Swiftly, swiftly flew the ship,
Yet she sailed softly too:
Sweetly, sweetly blew the breeze —
On me alone it blew.

"Oh! dream of joy! is this indeed
The light-house top I see?
Is this the hill? is this the kirk?
Is this mine own countree?[1]

"We drifted o'er the harbor bar,[2]
And I with sobs did pray —
O let me be awake, my God!
Or let me sleep alway.

"The harbor bay was clear as glass,[3]
So smoothly it was strewn!
And on the bay the moonlight lay,
And the shadow of the Moon.

"The rock shone bright, the kirk no less,
That stands above the rock:
The moonlight steeped in silentness
The steady weathercock.

"And the bay was white with silent light,
Till, rising from the same,
Full many shapes, that shadows were,
In crimson colors came.

"A little distance from the prow
Those crimson shadows were:

1. **Countree,** country; this form of the word occurs frequently in old ballads.

2. **Harbor bar,** a bank of sand or other matter at the mouth of a harbor, which obstructs navigation.

3. **The harbor bay, etc.** Notice the effect of quietness produced by this line and the eight which follow.

I turned my eyes upon the deck —
Oh, Christ! what saw I there!

"Each corse lay flat, lifeless and flat,
And by the holy rood![1]
A man all light, a seraph-man,
On every corse there stood.

"This seraph-band, each waved his hand:
It was a heavenly sight!
They stood as signals to the land,
Each one a lovely light;

"This seraph-band, each waved his hand,
No voice did they impart[2] —
No voice; but oh! the silence sank
Like music on my heart.

"But soon I heard the dash of oars,
I heard the Pilot's cheer;
My head was turned perforce away,
And I saw a boat appear.

"The Pilot and the Pilot's boy,
I heard them coming fast:
Dear Lord in heaven! it was a joy
The dead men could not blast.

"I saw a third — I heard his voice:
It is the Hermit good!
He singeth loud his godly hymns

1. **Holy rood**, holy cross. 2. **Impart**, give forth, send forth.

L. of C.

That he makes in the wood.
He 'll shrieve[1] my soul, he 'll wash away
The Albatross's blood."

PART VII

"This Hermit good lives in that wood
Which slopes down to the sea.
How loudly his sweet voice he rears!
He loves to talk with marineres
That come from a far countree.

"He kneels at morn, and noon, and eve —
He hath a cushion plump:
It is the moss that wholly hides
The rotted old oak-stump.

"The skiff-boat neared: I heard them talk,
'Why, this is strange, I trow![2]
Where are those lights so many and fair,
That signal made but now?'

"'Strange, by my faith!' the Hermit said —
'And they answered not our cheer.
The planks look warped! and see those sails,
How thin they are and sere!
I never saw aught like to them,
Unless perchance it were

1. **Shrieve,** shrive, hear confession and pronounce absolution. In the earlier ages of the Christian Church it was not uncommon for men to live as hermits, devoting themselves to fasting, penance, and prayer.

2. **Trow** (pronounced *trō*), think.

" 'Brown skeletons of leaves that lag
My forest-brook along;
When the ivy-tod[1] is heavy with snow,
And the owlet whoops to the wolf below,
That eats the she-wolf's young.'

" 'Dear Lord! it hath a fiendish look —
(The Pilot made reply)
I am afeared,'[2] — 'Push on, push on!'
Said the Hermit cheerily.

" The boat came closer to the ship,
But I nor spake nor stirred;
The boat came close beneath the ship,
And straight a sound was heard.

" Under the water it rumbled on,
Still louder and more dread:
It reached the ship, it split the bay:
The ship went down like lead.

" Stunned by that loud and dreadful sound,
Which sky and ocean smote,
Like one that hath been seven days drowned
My body lay afloat;
But, swift as dreams, myself I found
Within the Pilot's boat.

" Upon the whirl, where sank the ship,
The boat spun round and round;

1. **Ivy-tod,** ivy-bush. 2. **Afeared,** afraid; an old form.

And all was still, save that the hill
Was telling of the sound.

"I moved my lips — the Pilot shrieked
And fell down in a fit;
The holy Hermit raised his eyes,
And prayed where he did sit.

"I took the oars: the Pilot's boy,
Who now doth crazy go,
Laughed loud and long, and all the while
His eyes went to and fro.
'Ha! Ha!' quoth he, 'full plain I see,
The Devil knows how to row.'

"And now, all in my own countree,
I stood on the firm land!
The Hermit stepped forth from the boat,
And scarcely he could stand.

"'O shrieve me, shrieve me, holy man!'
The Hermit crossed his brow.[1]
'Say quick,' quoth he, 'I bid thee say —
What manner of man art thou?'

"Forthwith this frame of mine was wrenched
With a woeful agony,
Which forced me to begin my tale;
And then it left me free.

1. **The Hermit crossed his brow.** He did this to ward off evil, for he feared that the Mariner was a wicked spirit in human form.

"Since then, at an uncertain hour,
That agony returns:
And till my ghastly tale is told,
This heart within me burns.

"I pass, like night, from land to land;
I have strange power of speech;
That moment that his face I see,
I know the man that must hear me:
To him my tale I teach.

"What loud uproar bursts from that door!
The wedding-guests are there:
But in the garden-bower the bride
And bride-maids singing are:
And hark the little vesper bell,[1]
Which biddeth me to prayer.

"O Wedding-Guest! this soul hath been
Alone on a wide wide sea:
So lonely 't was, that God himself
Scarce seemèd there to be.

"O sweeter than the marriage feast,
'T is sweeter far to me,
To walk together to the kirk
With a goodly company!—

"To walk together to the kirk,
And all together pray,

1. **Vesper bell,** a bell calling to evening prayer. See note on l. 76.

While each to his great Father bends,
Old men, and babes, and loving friends,
And youths and maidens gay!

"Farewell, farewell! but this I tell
To thee, thou Wedding-Guest!—
He prayeth well, who loveth well
Both man and bird and beast.

"He prayeth best, who loveth best
All things both great and small;
For the dear God who loveth us,
He made and loveth all."

The Mariner, whose eye is bright,
Whose beard with age is hoar,
Is gone: and now the Wedding-Guest
Turned from the Bridegroom's door.

He went like one that hath been stunned,
And is of sense forlorn:[1]
A sadder and a wiser man
He rose the morrow morn.

1. **Of sense forlorn,** deprived of sense, of feeling.

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